VOICE OF SINDH

First Quarterly Newsletter 2020

Pakistan's Foreign Policy In The Twenty-First Century
Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi

Kashmir Is Burning
Sardar Masood Khan

Public Private Partnership
Syed Nasir Hussain Shah

Metro Story: Karachi – The Megacity
Hunaid Lakhani

Promoting Interfaith Harmony
Dr. Shaista Lodhi

Editorial: Karachi University At Crossroads
Dr. Umair Haroon

The Cover Art: Faiz Mahal, Khairpur

Faiz Mahal was built in 1798 by Mir Sohrab Khan, who established the Khairpur branch of the Talpur Mirs, and was the residence of the rulers of Khairpur State. The building has a unique architectural design and seems to have been designed by a professional engineer. Inside, the center of the Mahal consists of a huge hall wall with portraits of Maharajas and Princes giving the impression of sheer royalty in addition to the usual comfort and luxury of palaces. The palace is also famous as 'Lakhi Bangla' as it cost the owners Rs. 100,000 (one lakh) at that time. The structure of this palace is a fine example of engineering excellence of that era.

Khairpur district was a separate state in the Indian Subcontinent and was ruled by the Talpur Mirs during the reign of Talpur Dynasty (1783-1955). After independence in 1947, the Talpur Mirs opted Pakistan and became a part of Pakistan. At present, Faiz Mahal serves as the home of the last Talpur monarch, H. H. Mir Ali Murad Khan Talpur II (born 1933), and his sons Prince Abbas Raza Talpur and Prince Mehdi Raza Talpur.
As this place was the city of Mirs (rich and wealthy people), they built a number of monumental buildings some of which are home to the tourists, national and international.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

I take this opportunity to thank our esteemed contributors for sharing their valuable and intellectual work with us. I hope that we will continue this literary relationship in future too.

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PATRON-IN-CHIEF

HUNAID LAKHANI

I feel honored and privileged as a Patron-in-Chief of Voice of Sindh which will be formally known as VoS. It is a privilege to be related with such an august assortment of devoted people who are endeavoring hard in the administration of our dearest Voice of Sindh

VoS being a relatively new organization in terms of its structure and operations is focused on establishing institutions and traditions that are sustainable and responsive to the needs of the society.

I am delighted to see our group endeavor vigorously as I am aware of the troubles that must have been surmounted to accomplish the present status of this honorable association. VoS has taken on various benevolent activities, which have helped many to connect with the rest of the country. Considering the phenomenal progress we have made in such a short time, I am sure we will acquire a global status and become a highly esteemed organization.

My best wishes to the members of this organization for their endeavors. The existence of such a platform goes to show how productive engagements with the people of the Sindh will brighten our future. Lastly, with the global outbreak of COVID-19, the world is certainly not the same place after this pandemic. We are all a part of this global village and our collective actions to counter and minimize its catastrophic effects will shape the future of our people.

May Allah Almighty be with you all.

MESSAGE OF EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

DR. UMAIR HAROON

It is my pleasure and a great privilege to present to you the first edition of Voice of Sindh's newsletter. It is with much joy and anticipation that we celebrate the inaugural launch of this newsletter.

On behalf of the Voice of Sindh's Editorial Board, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the readership of Voice of Sindh. I take this opportunity to thank our authors, editors, and reviewers, all of whom have volunteered to contribute to the success of the newsletter.

An enormous amount of effort has gone into the development of this newsletter and I believe you will see that effort reflected in this edition and in the impact, it will have on the reading community. We also welcome comments and suggestions that could improve the quality of the newsletter.

VoS promises to continue to publish features, articles in distinct categories, correspondence items as well as reviews. It will also publish special issues on emerging topics of interest to a broader audience.

Finally, it is pertinent to mention that the world is facing global health catastrophe. Coronavirus has spread far and wide. A new global world order is on cards as global power centers are deminishing and economies are collapsing.

Even the first world with the most developed healthcare facilities is not safe from the pandemic as the number of global casualties crosses the 400,000 mark with more than 7 million cases wordwide.

Let us hope that we are able to beat the menace together and contribute in making this world a safer place to live.

Godspeed my friends!

NOTE FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Our life is manacled in words. The more command you have on language or words the more you are respected. The more precisely you discuss an idea, the more you will be heard. It is the word, the compilation of words into categories that give birth to fields and occupations. The more you know the words of different fields, the more you are the traveler's bro who is curious to know everything. That is the reason why there are newsletters.

Voice of Indus is a newly launched newsletter which provides useful insights about a wide variety of topics such as culture, travelogue, education, current affairs, foreign affairs, blogs and lifestyle to give our readers a diversified range of topics to ponder upon the latest trends of our society.

We are deeply indebted to our Patron-in-Chief Mr. Hunaid Lakhani for providing his patronage and Project Director/Editor-in-Chief Dr. Umair Haroon for spearheading the project with his instrumental leadership and guidance.

As the whole world battles with the impending threat of contracting the coronavirus, our sincere advice to you is to ensure all precautionary measures, read the newsletter and feed your brain well.

All views/ opinions/thoughts expressed in the articles belong solely to the author & are not necessarily endorsed/ supported by Voice of Sindh or author's organization.

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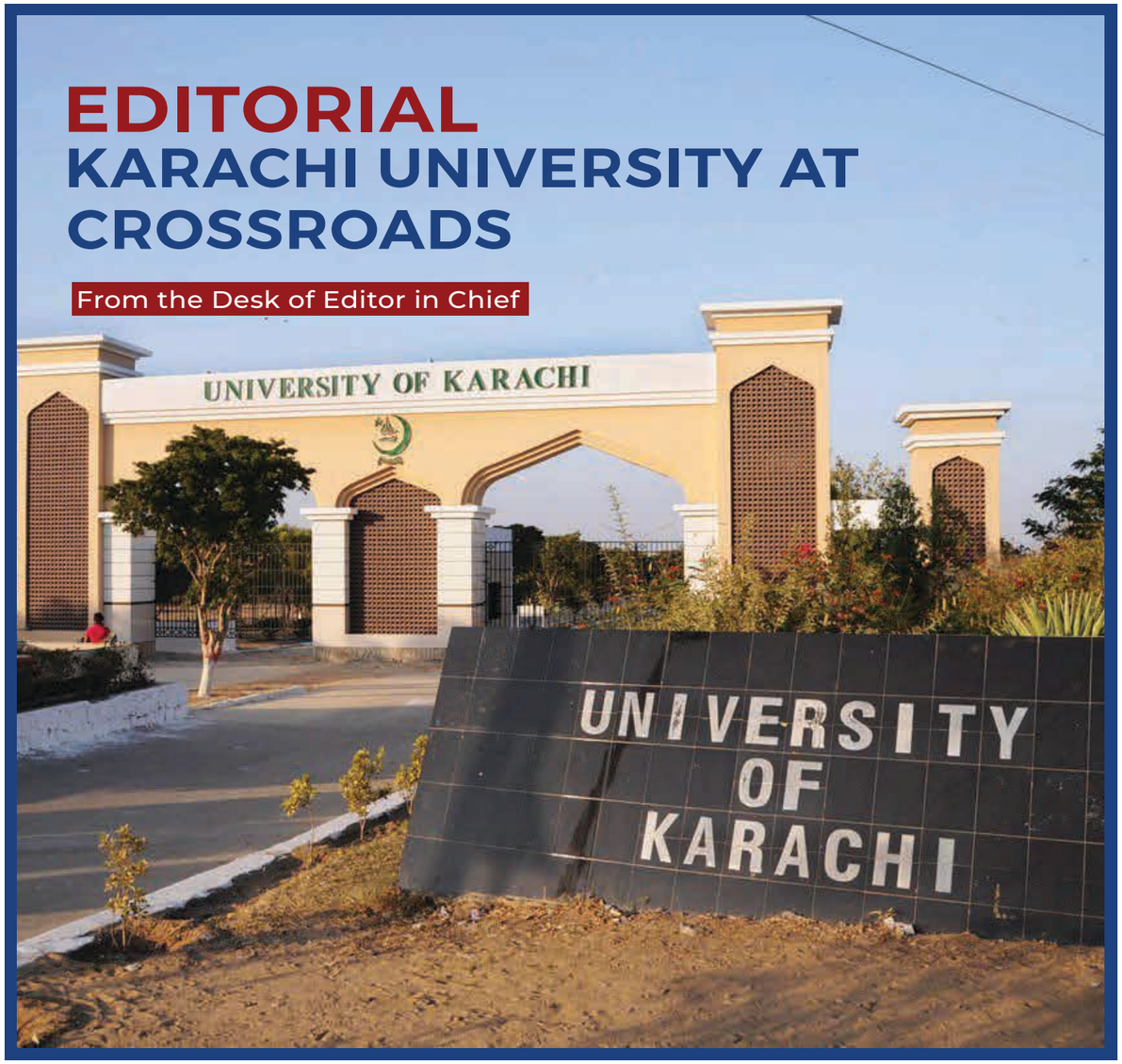
EDITORIAL
KARACHI UNIVERSITY AT CROSSROADS

From the Desk of Editor in Chief



Dr. Umair Haroon

Karachi University enjoyed a surplus budget until 2008, and now due to drained financial resources struggles to provide even the basic salary and pensions to its employees. The Vice Chancellors during the last two decades failed to prove their leadership and administrative skills which predominantly contributed to the varsity's decline.

University of Karachi is ranked among one of the most prestigious educational institutions of Pakistan whose graduates have been making prominent contributions on domestic and global level. UoK has the privilege of being the largest university of Pakistan when it comes to the number of enrolled students, which exceeds 43,000 with additional 150,000 students affliated via different colleges and private degree programs.

Various prominent national figures have graduated from this institution such as nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan along with other major personalities, including presidents, governors, scientists etc. However, despite being the university with the largest number of pupils, this national institution has been affected by severe financial irregularities, administrative issues, nepotism, political influence and the absolute absence of merit, which has permanently marred its reputation and has further caused a severe financial crisis.

Among the primary reasons behind such transformation, is the insufficient funding by government and hiring of inexperienced Vice Chancellors who are undoubtedly prominent in their respective fields but lack leadership skills. This is an institution which experienced a surplus budget up until 2008, and now due to drained financial resources struggles to provide even the basic salary and pensions to its employees.

Pakistan People's Party has been in power in the province for almost 12 years now, the 18th Amendment was supposed to be beneficial for educational institutes, however it has further contributed to their decline as education is not among the 'priorities' of the Sindh government.

As far as the administrative responsibilities are concerned, the post of Vice Chancellor demands of an individual with sound administrative capabilities and resolve. However, in the last two decades, all the individuals who have held this post failed to exhibit any administrative credentials and experience.

Additionally, it is imperative to remember the fact that Professor Dr. Abdul Wahab, who proved to be an excellent administrator and executed his authority quite effectively and efficiently was forced to resign as the Vice Chancellor of the varsity in less than two years, due to the mounting opposition from the employees and the teaching faculty. Although his brief tenure proved to leave long lasting impacts. Furthermore, it was Dr. Wahab who first introduced the 'evening program' in University of Karachi, initiated plantation drives inside the university premises, but his most significant contribution was his ability to resist and persevere against internal and external political influence which eventually led to his exit from the said post.

His dedication to abide by the principles of merit can be judged by the fact that he denied the admission to his own son in IBA as he failed to fulfill the required criteria. Quoting this incident in an autobiography he wrote that it caused him severe mental and emotional stress to deny admission to his own son. How tragic is that all the individuals who held this designation after Professor Abdul Wahab lacked the basic administrative skills which resulted in drastic administrative mishaps, proliferation of nepotism and political influence.

Professor Dr Pirzada Qasim Raza Siddiqui, a renowned poet, scholar and educationist, also held the designation of Vice Chancellor of University of Karachi for eight years. In an exemplary act of unbiasedness and impartiality, he refused to be a part of the selection process for his own son for university's selection board and did not participate in that interview as the head of selection board.

However, Dr. Siddiqui's last two years as Vice Chancellor proved to be devastating as the then strong MQM and provincial Governor-cum -Chancellor influenced the selection and hiring process and around 500 politically influenced and affliated individuals were appointed during the span of one year, (2010-2011).

A few of these new appointees served at local office of MQM, and proved to be what we now term as 'ghost employees.'

To compensate and negate the opposition, other political parties were also given a share of these 'political appointments' and there's a whole list of employees appointed in 16-17 grades with political affliation lacking basic requirements of their posts.

After Dr. Qasim, another scientist, Professor Dr. Mohammad Qaiser was appointed as the Vice Chancellor. Dr. Qaiser had previously served at various administrative positions. Despite having a reputation of an honest and respectable individual, his sincerity towards his designation and institute failed to prevent financial mismanagement and administrative lapses as he lacked basic administrative and decision-making skills, which would have prevented the emergence of financial crisis that haunted the in-coming Vice Chancellor Dr. Ajmal Khan.

As the tenure of Dr. Qaiser ended, the process of choosing the next Vice Chancellor began, and Professor Dr. Khalid Iraqi emerged as a strong contender for the relative designation. Dr. Iraqi was known as an experienced and efficient administrator as he had previously served as the Director of Admission committee and Acting Vice Chancellor on various occasions, where he successfully resisted political interference and upheld the principles of merit.

However, against all odds, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ajmal Khan who had no administrative experience, was preferred and appointed as the next Vice Chancellor of University of Karachi.

Dr. Khan, a renowned scientist like his predecessor Dr Qaiser, followed in his footsteps and embarked on a mission to tackle the financial crisis faced by the university.

Despite being a strong-willed individual he failed to secure the necessary support of employees and teaching faculty to ensure the effective implementation of his policies. It is worth mentioning here that University of Karachi during this period was liable to pay electricity bills amounting to PKR 30 million monthly; despite this fact, electricity meters were not installed in the residential area of the university.

Whether it be plots measuring 80 square yards or 2,000 square yards, all of which had multiple air conditioners installed, paid fixed bills ranging from a mere PKR 1,000-6,500 per month, where else a household with even one air conditioner produces electricity bill amounting to PKR15,000. Additionally, the failure to extract even 15% of total electricity bill from the university employees, as per the university regulations; further contributed to the already constrained financial situation.

Dr Ajmal Khan made efforts to ensure the installation of electricity meters in the residential area of the university, but failed due to severe opposition from university employees. University of Karachi has two proactive teachers' alliances, namely 'Karachi University Teachers' Forum'and 'Teachers' Alliance for Good Governance' (TAGG).

The former group has emerged as a pre-dominant force which has been playing an active role in university politics over the past decade. Its members have served at various key designations and prominent members include, former President of Teachers' Society Professor Dr. Jamil H. Kazmi, current president Professor Dr. Anila Amber Malik and current Vice-President Teachers' Society Professor Dr. S. M. Taha. This alliance/group actively backed Dr. Qaiser as Vice Chancellor and its members were appointed to key posts during his tenure.

TAGG group was led by Dr. Shakeel Farooqi and succeeded in securing the post of president along with various other significant posts in its very first election. Dr. Farooqi's alliance led teachers' society for two tenures but failed to deliver.

TAGG backed Dr Ajmal Khan and its members were appointed to certain key positions, a step which proved to bring about severe repercussions.

TAGG candidates lost in the upcoming teachers' union elections and Karachi university teachers' forum's successful candidates utilized their success to ardently oppose Dr. Ajmal's decisions and policies. Strikes, boycotts and protests followed, resulting in the resignation of university's Registrar Dr. Munawwar Rasheed.

Dr. Ajmal Khan's tenure saw five registrars, Professor Dr. Moazzam Ali Khan, who served as registrar during Dr. Qaiser's administration and was replaced by Prof. Dr. Nabeel Ahmed Zubairi. However, he too resigned in a few months over differences and Dr. Ajmal Khan appointed his close aide Dr. Munawwer Rasheed as the new registrar, a step which was blatant violation of HEC TTS regulations. The decision to appoint Dr. Munawwar Rasheed as registrar, who in fact was prohibited by HEC to hold any administrative office being a TTS faculty member, eventually encouraged and strengthened nepotism and favoritism and as a result all the key administrative appointments were awarded to individuals close to Dr. Ajmal.

Teachers who supported Dr. Ajmal's appointment as Vice Chancellor were initially satisfied, however the same teachers later ended up having differences with Dr Ajmal and adopted a strict narrative against him. As a result, the teacher's society demanded Dr. Ajmal to be ousted as Vice Chancellor and called for his resignation.

Dr. Ajmal's wife, Professor Dr Bilquees Gul, who at that time was Director of Institute of Sustainable Halophyte Utilization, played an active and decisive role in the university's administrative matters, which was severely criticized by the teaching faculty.

Dr. Ajmal evidently violated the moral code of ethics by appointing his spouse, as a member of Board of Advance Studies and Research in a session of Syndicate chaired by himself while bypassing senior candidates.

Due to Dr. Gul's positive reputation as a scientist, senior professors opted to raise objection on the process of appointment rather than on the basis of her personality.

On another instance, when Dr Gul's tenure as Director of Sustainable Halophyte Utilization came to an end, the next in-line candidates surprisingly stepped down in favor of Dr. Gul and she was appointed as the Director for the second time, in the Syndicate session chaired by her own husband Dr. Khan. A fact that needs to be highlighted here is candidates who stepped down belonged to their own circle and Dr. Khan's parent institute (ISHU).

Dr. Ajmal's tenure as university administrator was of an absolute totalitarian nature during which he attempted to make some positive changes but failed to do so due to lack of support from the staff.

At present, there's no proper system of attendance for employees and they come and go as they please and even benefit from encashment, which in fact is only reserved for and on retirement. However, Vice Chancellor is forced to allow such encashment on annual basis due to overwhelming pressure from employees.

Dr. Ajmal Khan, an honest individual, succumbed to increasing opposition and pressure and suffered from a cardiac arrest which proved to be fatal.

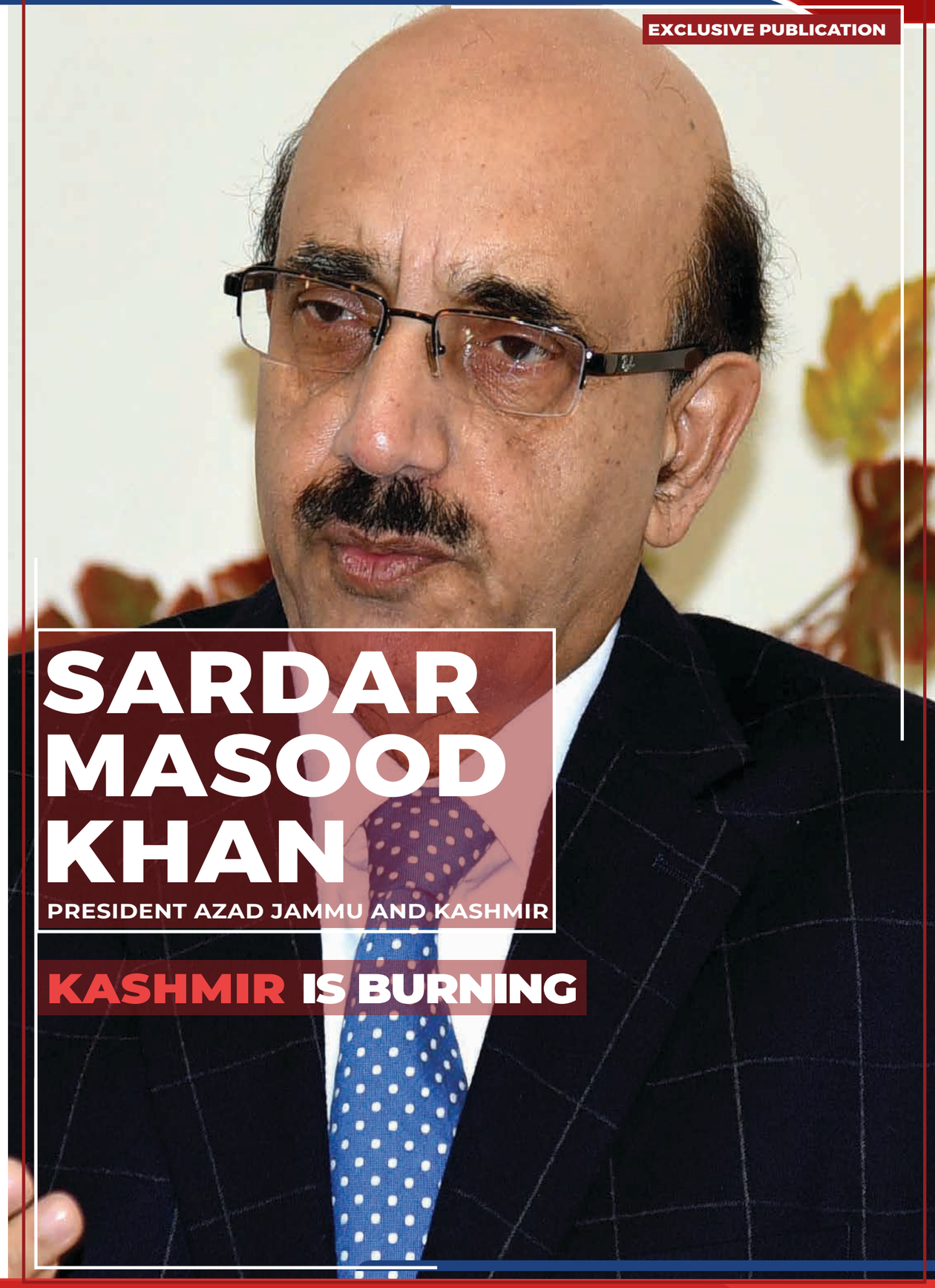
With the sudden demise of Dr. Ajmal Khan, the post of Vice Chancellor was lying vacant, Sindh government failed yet again to appoint a permanent Vice Chancellor and appointed Professor Dr. Khalid Iraqi as an interim Vice Chancellor of University of Karachi after a gap of a week.

In an amazing display of administrative proactiveness, Dr. Iraqi immediately appointed strong headed and senior professors with sound reputation like Dr. Saleem Shahzad and Dr. Arshad Azmi as Registrar and Controller of Examinations respectively to run the affairs of the university with an administratively pro-active approach.

"Dr. Khan, a renowned scientist like his predecessor Dr Qaiser, followed in his footsteps and embarked on a mission to tackle the financial crisis faced"

There is nothing but a dim hope, that the future Vice Chancellor of the varsity, whoever it will be allowed to exercise full authority in his decision making and policy implementation.

As Professor Iraqi is proving to be an effective and efficient administrator so there's still a hope that if he is eventually chosen as the permanent Vice Chancellor, university can sure use his expertise and administrative skills to restore its previous glory and prestige.



The author is currently the President of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. He has been a career diplomat serving as the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan's Ambassador in China and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York and International Organisations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Kashmiris and Pakistanis are keen to resolve the issue through diplomacy, dialogue and implementation of the United Nations resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir. Any miscalculation by India will be costly for it, for the region and the world.

It has now been over 300 days since the lockdown in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). This paradise on earth of mountains, valleys, rivers and forest is now in shackles. Kashmiris, young and old, are caged in their own homes and are being treated as aliens in their homeland by the oppressive Indian occupation forces.

A full gag order has been imposed in Kashmir, and now India wants to silence voices being raised for the rights of the Kashmiris. People are being killed, blinded, maimed, detained, tortured and forcibly disappeared. Women have been raped and molested by occupation forces to punish the entire population. The National Federation of Indian Women has reported that some 13,000 young boys have been abducted and transferred to prisons where they are being tortured. The real number is much, much bigger. Kashmiris in an act of civil disobedience have imposed upon themselves an economic boycott and refused to sell their annual produce, amounting to millions of dollars.

The US-based Genocide Watch has already issued a warning, saying that Kashmir is at Stage 8 based on (former Research Professor in Genocide Studies) Dr Gregory H. Stanton's 10 Stages of Genocide. This will be followed by Stage 9, the execution of genocide, and thereafter by Stage 10 i.e. denial of any such genocide. In a gross violation of international law and conventions, India on 31 October 2019 went a step further by bifurcating and colonizing the territory redrawing the boundaries of this internationally recognized dispute by issuing fake maps. Brazenly and unlawfully, it showed Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir as part of India's geographical boundaries. This is proof of their blatant irredentism.

Indian forces deliberately and maliciously along the Line of Control frequently target, kill and disable civilians in Azad Kashmir; and destroy houses and infrastructure. They have even used cluster munitions that have taken the lives of our children.

With more than 60 civilians killed and 300 seriously injured, the year 2019 has been the deadliest year for the 540,000 civilians living on this side of the LOC. Even though numerous reports on the human rights situation in IOJK have been published by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission, the British All-Party Parliamentarian Group for Kashmir (APPGK), Amnesty International and other reputable human rights organizations; a felonious silence has befallen the capitals of the powerful nations of the world. Constrained by realpolitik and their economic and strategic interests with India, these custodians of human rights prefer appeasement of India by refraining from holding it accountable for crimes against humanity in IOJK.

The people of IOJK, Azad Kashmir and Pakistan thank China, Iran, Turkey, Malaysia, Germany, Finland and Sweden for their bold stance on Kashmir and their condemnation of the serious human rights violations taking place in IOJK. The Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has been the strongest voice for the rights of the Kashmiri people, especially their right to self-determination. In the backdrop of the August 5 moves taken by India, the OIC had issued a strongly worded communiqué during the meeting of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir held on the side-lines of the UN General Assembly Session.

Likewise, the British, French and European parliaments have held debates on Kashmir and the US Congress has convened hearings on the human rights crisis in Kashmir. Even the civil society organisations and ordinary citizens of India have decried the Indian regime over its blatant and unlawful steps in Kashmir.

With India's threats to impose a war on Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan; our nation and Armed Forces continue to show restraint and responsibility. Kashmiris and Pakistan are keen to resolve the issue through diplomacy, dialogue and implementation of the United Nations resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir. Any miscalculation by India will be costly for it, for the region and the world.

As the saying goes, 'it takes two to tango'. We cannot have a diplomatic monologue with ourselves. India has always displayed intransigence towards dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir, in any case. In the past, all such talks have proved to be counterproductive and a mirage. No such talks, if India ever agrees to hold them, will be accepted without the representation of the Kashmiri people, who have been recognised as the key party to the dispute. Chances of any third party mediation – as offered by US President Donald Trump and other statesmen – have been rejected by India.

Pakistan should concur with a third party mediatory process provided it is credible and enjoys the support of all the parties to the dispute – Pakistan, India and the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Such talks should be convened within the parameters of the existing UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir and Article 33 of the UN Charter which prescribes the modalities for seeking a solution through negotiation, mediation, arbitration or other peaceful means.

The priority right now is to stop the genocide and human rights violations taking place in the IOJK. To initiate mediation, dialogue or any other process of resolution of the Kashmir issue, it is imperative that killings taking place in the IOJK should be stopped forthwith.

This paradise on earth of mountains, valleys, rivers and forest is now in shackles. Kashmiris, young and old are caged in their own homes.

> *"The priority right now is to stop the genocide and human rights violations taking place in the IOJK."*

Recently, Azad Kashmir received in Muzaffarabad the Special Envoy for the OIC Secretary General on Jammu and Kashmir, and the Chairperson of the All-Party Parliamentary Kashmir Group (APPGK), who were here to assess the situation first hand. Unlike AJK, IOJK is offlimits to anyone wishing to go there. The Human Rights Council must constitute a commission of inquiry to investigate the horrendous human rights violations in IOJK. The 2019 has been the the deadliest year for the 5,40,000 civilians living on this side of the LOC.

It is about time we work together for establishing a humanitarian corridor for the IOJK and ensure regional and global peace and security by urging the UN Security Council to continue holding sessions on Kashmir.

It is important that the people of Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir forge unity in their ranks; take the story and the case of Jammu and Kashmir back to the international community, especially the UN, leverage the strengths of the diaspora which has gained more clout in the Western countries and the Gulf region; use traditional and new media effectively; make Pakistan and Azad Kashmir strong economically; and reach out to the Indian civil society.

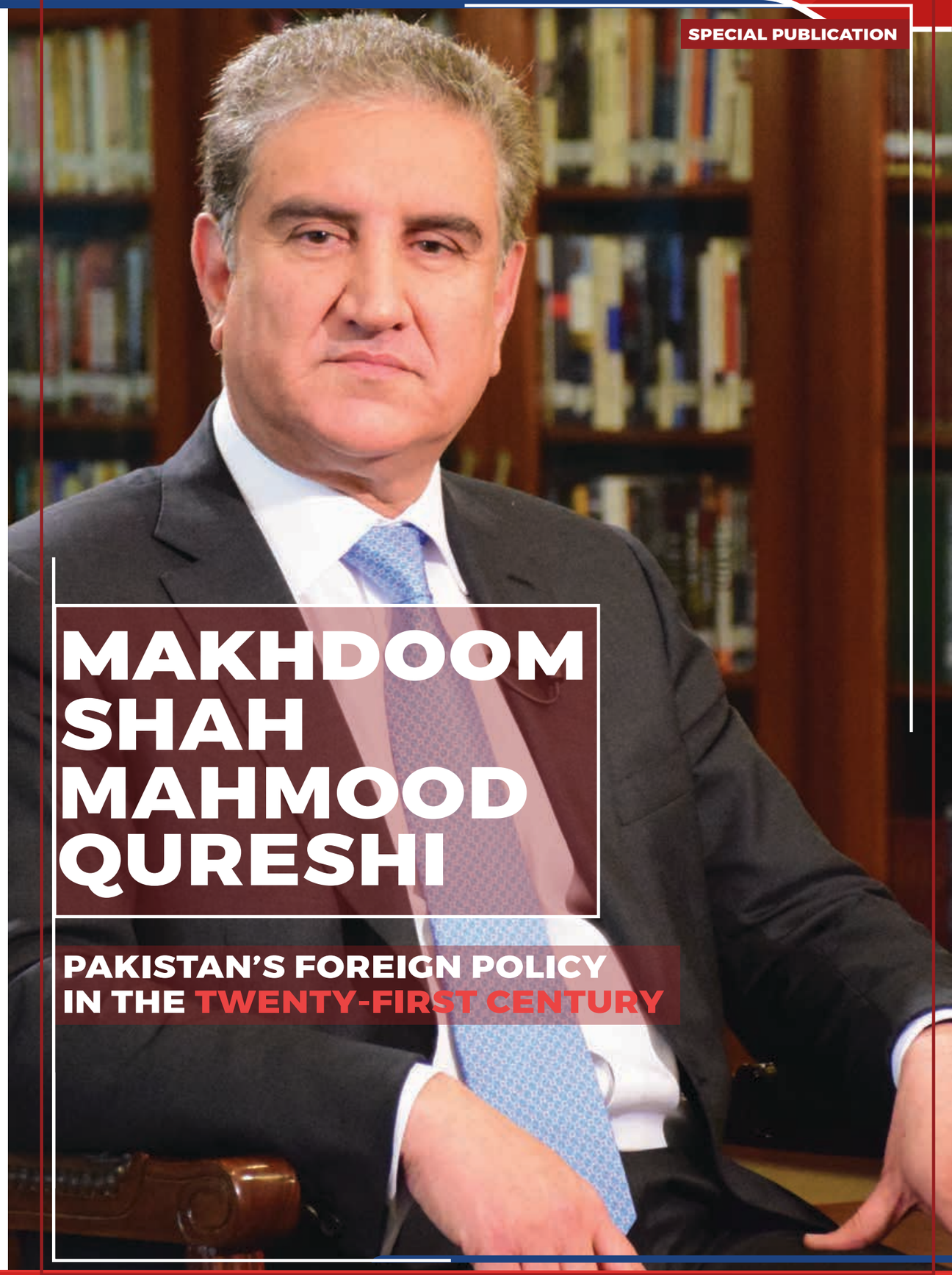
The people of Pakistan are determined to defend every inch of their homeland by all means against any threat. Cruelty against Kashmiris is cruelty against all mankind; and injustice against Kashmiris is injustice against humanity

Kashmiris have been striving for their freedom. They have vowed that they would break the chains of subjugation and exercise their right to self-determination despite India's recent aggression against them. No power on earth will be able to stop them from achieving this goal.

VOICE OF SINDH JOINS HANDS WITH MOOCS TO INTRODUCE CITIZEN JOURNALISM COURSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PAKISTAN

In the field of journalism, the knowledge of real world implications is as much significant as the academic itself. The course will be first of its kind in the country and will enlighten the students regarding the techniques of citizen journalism.

Dr. Umair Haroon
Project Director, Voice of Sindh



MAKHDOOM SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The author is the Foreign Minister of Pakistan and a notable politician of the country. He is the Vice Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and previously has also served as the Foreign Minister of the country from 2008 to 2011.

At the cusp of the third decade of the twenty-first century, the world is witnessing a transformative phase in international relations, when one historic epoch is ending and the successor has yet to take shape. The new era is germinating as much in the throes of crises such as the on-going pandemic, and the broader, more consequential challenge of climate change, as it is on the drawing boards of rapidly evolving geopolitics, the dynamics of the fast moving global marketplace and at the exciting frontiers of innovation and technology.

Every transformation is disruptive. Some have opined that Covid-19 will change the face of the world forever. Others believe it will catalyze existing, deeply-entrenched historic trends. However, one looks, there is no escaping the fact that this relentless march of history with its periodic upheavals will inevitably seismically shift the geopolitical landscape, cast aside anachronisms, and answer to its own needs.

One key task of our foreign policy at this juncture then, is to partake in the global transformation in a way that is constructive and consequential, helps advance stability within Pakistan, the region and the globe, and addresses national needs and interests in the context of current challenges and future projections.

The overarching framework of Pakistan's foreign policy continues to be encapsulated in the Quaid's ageless dictum, "peace within, peace without." I would only add that in the contemporary scheme of things, achieving this peace does not tantamount to a mere avoidance of conflict, but also to a proactive quest for conditions and circumstances that lead to an expansion in economic opportunity, an increase in general freedoms and an enhancement of security, in all its permutations.

In the context of foreign relations, it means fostering partnerships premised on shared prosperity, and common values, while embracing the changes needed to achieve these objectives through new tools and techniques of diplomacy, tailored for the new age.

In Pakistan's foreign policy during the last year and a half, primacy has been given to advancing of Pakistan's economic and development agenda in the shape of "economic diplomacy" and promoting and projecting the true and humane face of Pakistan through 'public diplomacy'. In some areas, significant breakthroughs have been scored, while in others, incremental, yet important progress has been achieved.

Take Pakistan's traditional relationships that have constituted the pillars of our foreign relations. Through Summit-level interaction and focused engagement, our relationships with partners such as China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the UAE, Qatar, Iran and Malaysia have been infused with an enhanced sense of purpose, premised on win-win economic collaboration. With increasing convergence, particularly in the context of Afghanistan, our relations with the United States, marred by years of distrust, have seen a qualitative change.

We have successfully leveraged our friendships to create the fiscal space needed to overcome economic headwinds, and secure long term investment commitments. Roadmaps and institutional frameworks have been put in place, and are being followed through.

A relentless pursuit of peace, sustained efforts to increase prosperity, and an unshakeable commitment to uphold principles consistent with our ethos as an important member of the Islamic and developing world fraternity have been the philosophical underpinnings propelling Pakistan's diplomacy over the past year-and-a-half.

Tangible outcomes have included launch of the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), conclusion of the next generation Pakistan-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and Strategic Engagement Plan with the EU, to name a few. Simultaneously, through initiatives such as Engage Africa, we have sought to penetrate the promising African market and deepen Pakistan's multi-faceted interface with African countries.

No blueprint for development can meaningfully reach fruition unless buttressed by an enabling peace and security environment. Our efforts to foster regional stability are yielding dividends. Notably, there has been progress in securing peace and stability in Afghanistan after more than forty years of turmoil.

The US-Taliban Peace Agreement represents a watershed. As part of a shared responsibility, Pakistan has played its part in facilitating the process thus far, and would like it to move to the next logical step of intra-Afghan negotiations.

Indeed, it is now for the Afghan leadership to seize this historic opportunity, and for the international community led by the US, to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated, that spoilers within and outside are kept at bay, and that the people of Afghanistan are not abandoned as before.

Pakistan, for its part, will continue to play a helpful role. Aspects of that role were highlighted at the International Conference on 40 Years of Hosting Afghan Refugees, which we hosted in February. In sharp contrast to xenophobic and anti-refugee sentiment prevalent elsewhere, Pakistan was recognized for the distinction of having hosted the largest protracted refugee situation in recent times, for the longest duration. We hope conditions would be created in Afghanistan to enable the millions of Afghans to return to their homeland with dignity and honor.

On the eastern front, we have been less fortunate. The RSS-inspired BJP government that has captivated Indian democracy, harbors a deep-seated antagonism to Islam and Muslims, harkening back to the foundational principles of the RSS grounded in racial supremacy, hatred for minorities and an ideological affinity to fascism.

Today, the façade of India's secularism stands exposed. India's minorities, particularly the Muslims, live in a perpetual state of fear of a majoritarian rule that carries out pogroms with impunity, alters citizenship rules to disenfranchise Muslims at will, and routinely demonizes them.

Deep-seated antagonism towards Pakistan seems part of this mental construct. All our gestures for peace and dialogue after the establishment of the PTI government were spurned by the Indian side on one pretext or another. In February last year, India raked up tensions with Pakistan for the purpose of electoral gain, and upon winning the election, forged ahead with the long-standing "Hindutva" agenda of assimilating the distinct identity of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K). India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 flew in the face of its commitments to the people of IOJ&K, Pakistan, and the international community.

Restrictions on movement and communication, unprecedented for anyone in the modern age, let alone a country claiming the mantle of world's 'largest democracy', have now entered the ninth month. More than 8 million Kashmiris have been rendered prisoners in their own land by over 900,000 Indian occupation forces. Hundreds remain illegally incarcerated. Even the spread of the pandemic has not tempered Indian appetite for oppression. Lack of internet accessibility and difficulties in movement are hampering unfettered supply of medicines and other essentials needed to effectively combat the virus.

Opportunistically, India has sought to take advantage of the world's preoccupation with the pandemic to change rules governing grant of domicile. The move has been criticized across the board, as yet another sinister step by India towards realizing its design of changing Jammu and Kashmir's demographic structure. All the while attacks by Indian forces on civilian populations living on the Line of Control in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and ceasefire violations have continued unabated.

Pakistan has confronted Indian aggression with responsibility and restraint, but also with firm resolve. The stand-off of February 2019, ended with Pakistan reaffirming its conventional deterrent, downing two Indian Air Force jets, and returning the captured pilot without pre-condition. In this way, Pakistan engineered a de-escalation while ensuring that India's aggression did not go unanswered.

Side-by-side with regional outreach, Pakistan's stature has risen in the comity of nations. Prime Minister Imran Khan is today, among the few world statesmen whose voice is independent, influential and imbued in equal measure with reason and principles. He has raised this voice as an ambassador of Kashmir, as a passionate advocate for international cooperation to combat white collar corruption, and for concrete measures on climate change. Under the Prime Minister's guidance, Pakistan is leading the efforts to counter Islamophobia, and to highlight Islam's true message of peace and amity.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and at the cusp of one of the worst economic recessions in living memory, Pakistan is taking the lead in articulating developing world concerns and advocating debt relief and restructuring.

The challenges ahead require us to marshal all available strength. While issues confronting a world in turmoil and flux do not lend themselves to easy solutions or predictable outcomes, I have no doubt that the tenacity of our diplomacy and professionalism of our diplomatic service can and will prove equal to the task.

"While we have not sought escalation, we have countered India's belligerent posture with strength and resolve, and have continued to uphold our principled support to the just cause of self-determination for the people of Jammu & Kashmir".

Pakistan has taken up the Kashmir cause in all earnestness. Primarily because of India's own actions, but also on account of our strong advocacy, the Kashmir Issue is more internationalized today than in a long time. A large and influential body of world opinion is increasingly critical of Indian policies and actions, and Kashmir has become the focus of discourse in many parliaments around the world. Conspicuously, it has come under discussion in the UN Security Council after a hiatus of some 55 years. Going forward, Pakistan will continue to lend the Kashmiri people its full political, diplomatic and moral support for their inalienable right of self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.

Despite India's transgressions in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan opened its border to visa-free entry of Sikh yatrees from India and across the world, to one of the holiest sites of Sikh religion on the occasion of 550th birth anniversary of founder of Sikh religion, Baba Guru Nanak. We were honored to welcome among our guests former Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh. Kartarpur embodies the spirit of tolerance, amity and inter-faith harmony which we hope will one day guide the trajectory of the troubled Pakistan-India relationship.

Finally, earlier this year, when tensions spiked in the Middle East, Pakistan came out firmly against conflict, and in favor of dialogue and diplomacy to settle long-standing differences and disputes. War in the Middle East would be disastrous for Pakistan, and the region, as well as the world economy. There would be no winners. In the backdrop of heightened tensions, Pakistan unequivocally declared that it will not be part of any regional conflict, nor will its soil be used against any other country. On the other hand, as Prime Minister Imran Khan declared, Pakistan will always be a "partner for peace."

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

A SUCCESS STORY OF SINDH GOVERNMENT

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and his vision deserves all the credit of this success model as he is well aware of the problems and understands currents and counter-currents in the province

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah

Public Private Partnership (PPP) has remained a major success story of the Pakistan People's Party government in Sindh which has done wonders. It is indisputable that Sindh has succeeded in gaining the trust of the reluctant private sector on the strength of its approach and performance in handling the technical, financial and legal challenges associated with the complex option of inclusion of private sector in projects of public interest.

Sindh, the province lagging in most socio-economic indicators of wellbeing, has updated its public-private partnership ecosystem for greater engagement of the private sector to improve the civic amenities and social service. From health and education to highways, water, sanitation, mining and power generation almost all sectors have been explored for partnership projects.

The performance of Sindh, ruled by Pakistan Peoples' Party, has been noted by the global monitors. A report last year, 'The 2018 Infrascope', an index and study by The Economist Intelligence Unit that evaluates the environment for public-private partnership in Asian countries made an exception to include Sindh along with Gujrat in India, 'as potential models of best practice'. Sindh ranks 6th of 19 entities assessed. Its ranking was three places above Pakistan that was graded at 9th position in the said index.

In 2010, The Sindh Public Private Partnership Act was passed which gives power and authority to the government and its agencies to make agreements and arrangements of financing, maintaining and designing numerous projects with private parties.

It means that PPP is the middle party because of this act between the government and a private business that provides public assets or services by investing and managing the private sector for a specified period of time.

The unit of PPP of the Sindh health department created a project with the aim and purpose to provide better and improved health services to the people which was named as 'Public Private Partnership Contracts in Health'. The tenders were issued in December 2013.

Specifically, if the model of PPP is noticed so it could be seen that NGOs were aimed to improve the healthcare facilities and services by establishing the institutes of healthcare, increasing the capacity of the buildings, fulfilling the need of people like women, children and old people in healthcare institutes sorting out their issues, providing awareness about health rights and managing health administration and many others.

The PPP model involves characterized assignment of hazard among accomplices and installments to the private segment connected to pre-decided benchmarked quantifiable principles.

The authorities invited reputed NGOs in which 30 NGOs, approximately, took part and showed their expressions of interest in the project yet 12 of them were given the requests for proposal (RFPs) from which five were finalized while four of them were tasked to maintain, improve and run the health facilities. The fifth NGO was asked to provide services of ambulance to the community.

Along these lines, NGOs have to be cautious and straightforward in the monetary exercises. Most NGOs depend totally on subsidizing due to which it gets more important to have appropriate bookkeeping frameworks.

Non-Profit associations should be responsible to the assets supplier who bolsters the social government assistance causes. With legitimate frameworks, NGOs can monitor their uses and submit convenient reports to the legislature. This would prompt trust among public and private partners, along these lines expanding the odds of NGOs getting a constant help from their accomplice. Besides, appropriate money frameworks will likewise enable the NGOs to keep up budgetary reports and exhibit their whole spending to the administrative bodies according to the concurred terms. With amazing money on board, NGOs upgrade their picture that improves their worth and making them progressively sound.

By surrounding all around characterized budgetary plans and strategies, NGOs likewise gain great notoriety inside its locale.

They can likewise improve their present position, gain trust, confidence and unwavering quality. Exactness and straight-forwardness in each demonstration won't leave chances for the NGOs to be 'Protested' by the administration.

The author is a Provincial Minister of Sindh for Information, Local Government, Forests, Housing & Town Planning and Religious Affairs

A GAME CHANGER FOR SINDH GOVERNMENT

The PPP model can expect a significant job in the advancement of human services area in Pakistan and this program can grow its degree for better administrations to the meriting individuals. If PPP's medicinal services ventures are successful in meeting their goals they will be useful in dispelling fears with respect to the idea in the nation related to the association. Accomplishment of the activities will likewise open new ways for upgrading the degree and the inclusion of such joint efforts in the nation to convey reasonable advancement effectively.

Common governments are anticipating working with private associations under the PPP model to adequately react to improvement needs. One of the most significant strides to conquer the troubles in PPP model is recognizing the difficulties that an association is confronting, and the zones where there is a space to improve, in the wake of distinguishing these key zones open division's specialists can structure anarrangement to improve, and ideally beat the snags private accomplices are confronting.

In particular, on-time provisioning of assets to the non-benefit associations will be very fundamental in accomplishing the ideal objectives. Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and his vision deserve all the credit of this success model as he is well aware of the problems and understands the currents and counter-currents in the province. With his unwavering support, we have been able to pool in a team of credible and efficient officers picking talent and companies on merit to pursue the cause.

METRO STORY

Hunaid Lakhani

KARACHI- The Megacity

The stunningly diverse, the largest cosmopolitan, and culturally breathing Karachi is never left alone by its banes. The city categorically drives Pakistan's economy, contributing the largest, approximately 25 percent of the total GDP of the country. In terms of revenue generation, Karachi's contribution is again around 65 percent and includes taxes, custom duties, and service charges. However, these figures do not present a true picture of its potential. Economists have been earnestly emphasizing the necessity to pull Karachi out of this spell of underperformance.

Karachi has always lived by its own rules. Although it is identified with its core issues like population, internal migration and massive urbanization, crumbling infrastructure, absence of government machinery and interest, coupled with political unrest, and ethnic and sectarian violence, none of this has stopped the city from being the lifeline and core bread earner for the country.

So, no wonder the city does not stop doing its bit, even though it is left to perform far below its actual contributing potential to the national economy. Its scars are real, and you can almost hear the squeals of pain each time they are scratched by time.

THE POOR FINANCIAL HUB

In an era of periodic economic recessions, Karachi has been hit the worst. The inhabitants from other cities and rural Sindh who migrate here with the core aim of finding livelihood cause the city's population to go beyond its capacity to have by the short hairs. Growing unemployment leads to street crimes and other forms of violence. It is highly important for business hubs to provide safe and conducive environment for investment.

CIVIC VIEWS

The civic structure of the city also leaves much to be desired. Lack of hygiene triggered by eroding infrastructure, improper accommodation, illegal settlements, encroachment for makeshift businesses, inadequate public health facilities, unregulated transport, become leading obstacles in making flourishing business activities.

ECONOMIC CAPITAL

The city has scores of important commercial head offices, media outlets, retail outlets, shopping centers, and the most important financial institutions, the State Bank of Pakistan and Pakistan Stock Exchange. The slightest hint of unrest has resulted in large scale loss of life and property in the past here. Therefore, business outlets are extremely conscious about the safety factor now. Companies heavily outsource security services to ensure smooth execution of their business activities. However, new businesses are concerned about this prevailing situation and desire to operate in a tension-free environment. For this, they have repeatedly approached local authorities to ensure installation of safety cameras and increase screening of individuals' movement around the main business avenues.

KARACHI PORT

Karachi Port Trust is a federally administrated agency facilitating cargo movement and has the largest coal terminal of Pakistan. The port's biggest issues remain the traffic routes leading to the port and environmental violations. The port has been continuously accused of operating in utter violation of environmental regulations. The locals residing close to the port have confirmed these violations citing the increased incidence of respiratory and optical disorders, especially in colonies close to the coal terminal. The port trust has made several recommendations to provide freeway to the port so that heavy cargo vehicles do not pose a risk to the public transport and also in order to continue the port activities without any hindrance or delay. A dedicated transit route to the port will improve the consistency of port operations.

INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

The industrial estates of Karachi are home to some of the most dynamic and growing industrial complexes such as SITE, KITE, NKITE, Dhabeji, and Port Qasim. With around 4,000 industrial establishments, the SITE area in Manghopir is the largest industrial park in Pakistan. The Korangi Industrial Area has most of the oil and gas distribution, textile manufacturing, food processing, and automobile manufacturing industries.

The local industrialists in Karachi need to be mobilized to participate in special economic zones (SEZ). The foreign investors are largely interested in establishing such zones owing to ease of doing business, discounts, tax exemption, and duty exemption on machinery procurement, power generation backup, and many other industry boosting investments. The SEZs can provide better infrastructure, business environment and necessary facilities in proximity which boosts manufacturing processes and trade transactions.
SEZs in Karachi could be excellent breeding grounds for industrial approaches and theories. The concentration of trade activity attracts foreign direct investment, helps in creating employment and paves way for economic reforms on a larger scale.

ALTERNATE ENERGY SOURCES

To ascertain the provision of energy to industries in Karachi is becoming a challenge with every passing day. There is a growing need to adopt alternative energy solutions to manage the energy requirements load and sustain the local industry and business activity. Pakistan is one of the worst-hit countries in terms of climate change. The energy consumption at both industrial and consumer level is rapidly growing. Companies need to be encouraged to innovate and invest in alternate energy sources to overcome the power shortages which is a huge obstacle for production and services sectors.

BUSINESSS INCUBATION AND CATALYSIS

Sectors like IT, telecom, hospitality, and transport have huge room for development in megalopolis. Recently, growth can be witnessed in the food business with hundreds of new food franchises and startups emerging on the scene. However, the hospitality industry is mostly concentrated on large hotels and very few guest houses. Accommodation services with comfortable lodgings and economical in-house food services and travel guides are still in dearth. Similarly, IT professionals are graduating in large numbers from local universities. It is important to explore the example of Bengaluru as the largest IT industry establishment in South Asia. Not only India has exploited the indigenous IT potential through the IT SEZ of Bengaluru, but the city is also responsible for the largest volume of IT exports to the world in South Asia. Bengaluru received $48.2 billion into its IT sector as foreign direct investment in 2017. Karachi can also explore its IT potential through investment in a SEZ along the lines of Silicon Valley. This can be a great substitute for eliminating unemployment, the pool of trained professionals and observatory.

COMPARISON WITH MAJOR PORT CITIES OF ASIA

Tokyo and Singapore are the leading economic hubs in Asia. The cities have exploited their proximity to the sea and lived up to the spirit of a port city. Singapore has developed itself into an important financial center of Asia. Its major industries include electronics, chemicals, financial services, oil drilling equipment, petroleum refining, rubber processing, processed food, shipping, offshore gig construction, health sciences, and most importantly tourism. Singapore is a preferred tourist destination and received 18.5 million international visitors in 2018 – a significant 6.22 percent increase from 2017. Similarly, Tokyo has had a long history of being hit by natural disasters. The city has been damaged by earthquakes on small and large levels. Yet, Tokyo has emerged as the strongest economy in Asia over time. Its core industries include automobiles, consumer electronics, iron and steel. The capital city is home to some of the most significant corporate headquarters in the world.

Both these cities have efficiently maintained political stability, infrastructure development, tourism promotion, and cultural tolerance. In 2018, Japan's GDP from tourism reached $ 45,276 billion. Tokyo received 14.24 million visitors in 2018 which is 3.4 percent more than in 2017.

To conclude,undoubtedly, Karachi has the potential of becoming a globally aclaimed port city, what it needs is visionary and true spirited leadership. I am hopeful that Karachi's socio-economic development is one of the major priorities of the current federal government and we will see it happening soon. **Pakistan Zindabad!**

PROMOTING INTERFAITH HARMONY

ODERO LAL

Dr. Shaista Lodhi

The world is a glimpse of Eden, a beautiful garden that has the waves of harmony and peace all around which bloom the flowers of affection and euphoria that let the air of irenic flow. However, humans turn this into the hub of bloodshed with their rigid thoughts that lead to the pathway of extremism and violence which rot away the grass of tranquility and benevolence in majority parts. Yet, the roots and seeds have remained still. Therefore, there are places like Sindh which can be called the center of interfaith harmony because of its places like Odero Lal! Odero Lal is the place where two religions co-exist, having a wall between mosque and temple that separates them in the ground and passage of shrine that binds three of them together on a single ground near Tando Adam at a distance of 30 km from Hyderabad.

For Hindus, it is the shrine of Odero Lal, the man who was mentioned in Rig Veda as Varuna Deva while Muslims think it is the shrine of Sheikh Tahir. According to history, told by Ali Akbar, a worker at the shrine, Odero Lal was also known as Bhagwan Ashta Dev or Jhoolay Lal whose real name was Ashta Dev. According to him, Ashta is the synonym of an idol. Akbar told that he converted into Islam and was renamed as Sheikh Tahir who gave the message of harmony and peace that brought two religions together for ages and are still living together.

Akbar further told that people stop their pooja, beating drums/instruments when Azaan starts in a mosque. Muslims also celebrate their festivals with the Hindu community. The 18 acres of land runs itself self suffriently with agriculture and harvesting financially whose 90 percent of the part is given to temple and remaining part to the mosque.

The guide took the VOS team to the other four shrines built in the passage and to the wall as well that separates the religious places. Meanwhile, Muhammad Jameel, resident of the place, told us that the Muslims are in majority at Tando Adam but none of them stop Hindus from offering their prayers and follow the footsteps of their ancestors who lived there peacefully with Hindus; therefore, there have been zero riots since the collapse of Babri Masjid despite the turmoil faced by the Muslims in India. Besides, it is noted that the place has a zero percent crime rate. The followers and worshippers of Sheikh Tahir or Jhoolay Lal or Odero Lal are called Daryapanthis or followers of the river. They named the deity Odero which means water which gave them the message of Sindhuhesh- the message of sharing every sacred thing

The author is a prominent television host and showbiz artist of the country.

That's the reason why the people share their beliefs with each other about Odero Lal and celebrate Chaiti Chand together. Chaiti Chand is the principal ritual that marks the birth of Sheikh Tahir and the beginning if another year of Hindu calendar. Chaiti is the first month of the calendar which starts when winter and spring are ending and cotton is being harvested. Although, majority of Hindus migrated to India and left Sindh, Ram Panjwani sang the anthems of peace and interfaith harmony to bind all religions together in the knot of Sindhyyat that portrays Jhoolay Lal as ISHTDEV. The festival begins in the evening completely that consists of a fair which starts after Jyot Jagayan. Jyot Jagayam is a ritual in which sacred lamps are lighted. It is followed by pooja. It is performed at Balanbho Sahib, a well that according to worshippers has importance because of having the ability to heal people, before the sunset. After the pooja, devotees are enlightened by sprinkling water on them.

This ritual is called Chando Mela consists of a number of traditions and rituals. One of them is Behrano Parwan Karan and in this ritual, the people bring Behrano, a decorated brass plate which is filled with fruits, flour, lamps, and rose petals, and float it into the water with the belief that fish and other aquatic animals would be fed that result in showering of blessing onto them from the Pir. Daryapanthis from different cities like Nawabshah and Mirpurkhas bring Behrano to float in water. The plate is floated in Indus .

Therefore, many of the followers float their traditional plates in any canal, nowadays, because all water bodies come from Indus in Sindh ultimately. The other two rituals that keep the festival alive are Pallo Payan and Chhej. The Pallo Pagan is the traditional way to pray in which people hold their dupatta or daman of their kameez and pray to their deity to fix their problems from God's order. Meanwhile, Chhej marks the end of the mela. That's why it involves dancing of people in a circle by waving Dandia.Unfortunately, digitization has been increasing extremism and rigidity in the globe but places like Odero Lal are enlightening the people by standing as exemplary sites that give the message of love and show vibrantly how to practice interfaith harmony with people from all nooks and corners of the world.

It can be hoped that the world of today not only claps for Daryapanthis but appreciates them by following their footsteps to make this mega living painting Eden once again.

14,000 PhD Scholars have been produced in last ten years yet the quality of higher education in the country is questionable.

FLAWED HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Dr. Umair Haroon

Pakistan has produced around 14,000 PhD scholars during the last ten years yet the quality is still questionable. The HEC claims to have sponsored 3,000 candidates for doctoral research and 5,000 were financed for studies abroad. But scholars still point fingers at and publically criticize the poor quality, nepotism and plagiarism in the doctoral studies.

Instead of strengthening and advancing the undergraduate studies and masters programs, we invest billions of rupees in producing PhDs by sending them abroad for doctoral studies and still questions are raised on the poor quality of theses.

Our research programs are considered dubious and are sheer mockery in the name of research. Even the university supervisors and vice chancellors are involved in the malpractices of passing the plagiarized theses. In order to improve the ranking, universities are often involved in unethical practices. They appoint some unscrupulous examiners to clear the dubious thesis. Government had introduced GRE tests for candidates to control plagiarism, corruption and to improve the quality of our doctoral research system but the results have not improved yet.

The major problem with our doctoral studies is that there is a poor knowledge of disciplines. These ill prepared PhDs often become the faculty members and then rise in the senior positions. Such practices are going on for decades and ruining our educational system.

These ill practices give power to the mediocre failed educators in our culture and eventually not knowing a thing they start teaching students without having the basic knowledge, hence, ruining students as well as our country's future.

Another hindrance we face is that these so called PhDs lack the basic knowledge and understanding of the discipline which is the major drawback in our educational system. We should make it mandatory to concentrate and strengthen our undergraduate studies.

Instead of producing PhDs, we ought to strengthen our education system and produce competent professionals. Instead of rewarding publication papers that often turn out to be fake, we should reward educators with good teaching skills.

We should build new excellence centers for doctoral studies with adequate facility, equipment, educators as well as administrative resources.

The current situation of Pakistan is that we are mass producing research papers just like a paper factory in a race to improve ranking. HEC has played a crucial role in destroying the university research framework because of its prime focus around delivering research papers.

If these issues are not sorted out, then unfortunately Pakistan's future will stay distressing and bleak.

The author is the Editor-in-Chief and Project Director of Voice of Sindh.

PAKISTAN INDIA NUCLEAR STANDOFF

THE WORLD IS IN DANGER

Syed Jazib Shamim

"Kashmir has become a nuclear flashpoint among both the countries especially after the nullification of Article 370 of Indian constitution by Modi led fascist government".

An India-Pakistan nuclear war could double the normal death rate in the world. The last thing either country, or the world, needs is a mushroom cloud.

Nuclear proliferation in South Asia is a very serious issue. Archrivals India and Pakistan have developed serious contentions since 1947 which have led to wars and spending of billions of finance over their defense budgets. During the last 70 years, Pakistan and India have become the fastest growing nuclear states of the world.

A doctrine of defense and national security rationale came into existence soon after 1947. On Pakistani side, it faced threats from day one due to Akhand Bharat ideology which further strengthened by back to back wars one in 1965 and the other in 1971 which led to the disintegration of East Pakistan.

Moreover, India, having an edge on conventional weapons over Pakistan, went on to become an undeclared nuclear state in 1974 when it conducted nuclear tests in Pokhran.

Pakistan sought to become a nuclear power in order to stabilize the balance of power which was highly disturbed due to India's becoming a nuclear power. In 1998, India and Pakistan officially joined the nuclear club by conducting nuclear tests. These nuclear tests established the balance of power and deterrence factor among both countries which ultimately led towards a no war period for almost 21 years with the exception of a border skirmish at Kargil in 1999.

Although, development of both the states as nuclear powers has stopped the conventional wars but the threat of a nuclear standoff is not out of question. In late February 2019, both the countries were engaged in a short scale border skirmish in which an Indian Airforce fighter jet was also shot down by Pakistani Airforce and both countries prepared their armies for a full fledged war which was later averted due to foreign intervention.

Later on, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan clearly indicated in his speech to the UN General Assembly that if a conventional war takes place and Pakistan faces the threat of losing the conventional war, it will use the nuclear option which would have devastating effects not only in both the countries but across the borders.

India and Pakistan each have about 150 nuclear warheads at their disposal, and that number is expected to climb to more than 200 by 2025.

Kashmir has become a nuclear flashpoint among both the countries especially after the nullification of Article 370 of Indian constitution by Modi led Indian government. Both the states are at a position of standstill on Kashmir issue while sentiments are also involved on both sides of the border. Pakistan has shown clear intention of engaging in dialogue while the Indian government is running away from peace talks and using offensive ways which hints at the possibility of a military showdown. The 12.5 millions of Kashmiris have been locked down in the valley and have suffered misery and turmoil of more than 300 days in the lockdown state.

This issue is one of the most burning issues of the world since the implications of a nuclear war would have devastating effects on the whole region for which the international community must step in for initiating a peace process.

Surprisingly, the role of United Nations and international community is not that proactive which is alarming. Despite repetitive offers of mediation by the American President Donald Trump, New Delhi is yet to respond positively to these offers and is continuing its stance of declaring Kashmir as its internal issue.

In a recent research, US scientists have examined how such a hypothetical future nuclear conflict would have consequences that could ripple across the globe.

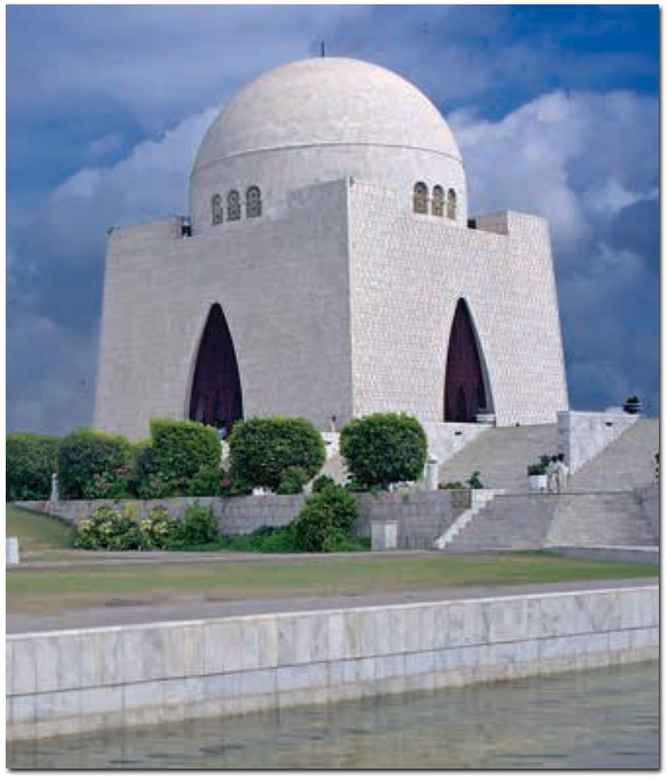
Today, India and Pakistan each have about 150 nuclear warheads at their disposal, and that number is expected to climb to more than 200 by 2025. The researchers said amid recent tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors over Kashmir after India revoked J&K's special status. The research study, published in the journal Science Advances, looked at a war scenario that may occur between India and Pakistan in 2025. "An India-Pakistan war could double the normal death rate in the world," said Brian Toon, a professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, USA.

While both the neighboring countries have waged several wars over Kashmir, they could come to possess a combined count of 400 to 500 nuclear weapons by 2025, the study noted.

In a scenario of a nuclear war, exploding nuclear weapons could release 16 to 36 million tons of soot -- tiny black carbon particles in smoke -- that could rise to the upper atmosphere and spread around the world within weeks. It would cause sunlight reaching the Earth decline by 20 to 35 per cent, causing our planet's surface to cool by 2 to 5 degrees Celsius. Rainfall across the world may also reduce by 15 to 30 per cent, both of which could have larger regional impacts.

A nuclear war between India and Pakistan may wipe out 50 to 125 million people in the direct effects, with additional deaths from mass starvation also possible worldwide.
Former US President Ronald Reagan once said that "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." For the sake of the planet and their own survival, Indian and Pakistani leaders should start adopting peacemaking efforts for their own interests. The last thing either country, or the world, needs is a mushroom cloud.

The author is the reviewer/ referee of impact factor global research journals based in USA.



TRAVELOGUE

KARACHI FROM THE EYE OF A EUROPEAN

Dr. Andrew Anzur Clement

The path that originally led me to Pakistan began through an act of kindness. My mother was visiting Pakistan as part of an East-West Centre journalists' exchange in 2012. She met with a Pakistani-American businessman living in Karachi, who suggested that I should visit Pakistan on my way home from a college internship in Thailand later that year. He volunteered to host me at his family's home in the Defence Housing Authority; I decided to take him up on his offer. Despite my decision, the first time I flew to Karachi I was nervous. I knew that the negative media reports about the city – and Pakistan -- couldn't be the whole story. Still, I didn't know what I would find – better or worse.

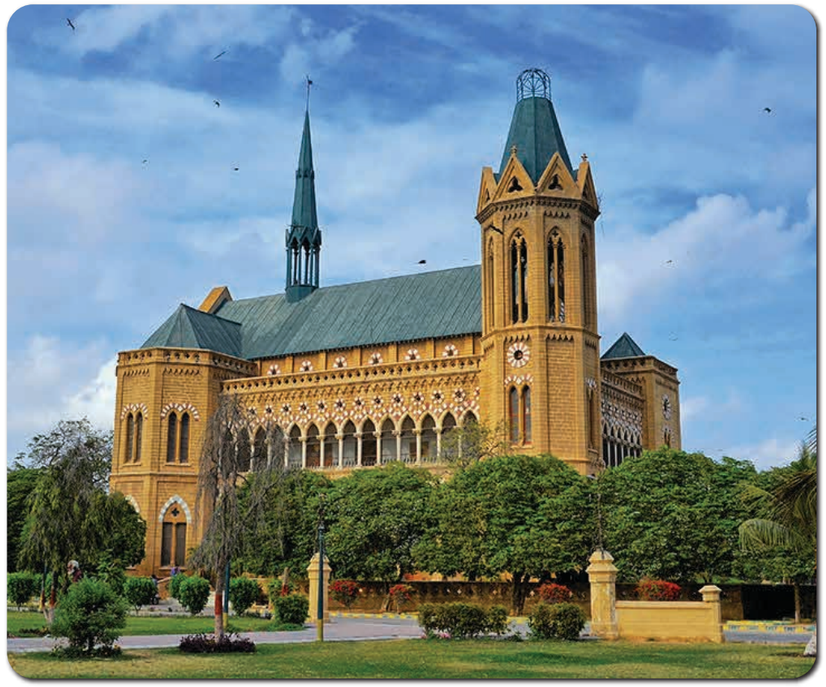
My friend and I stood in front of a door in the basement of the University of Karachi's library. The rather auspicious plaque over it read the 'Quaid - I - Azam Collection.' It was the door that would pique my interest in the country that I'd originally come to simply because of a family connection.

"I never can get them to let me in there," my friend, a journalism student, complained as we stood in front of the door. "Why don't you go and ask the librarian? You're a guest; they'll have to let us in."

I did as my friend asked. Sure enough, the librarian unlocked the door for us. It was just the latest example of the amazing hospitality shown to me on both of my two trips to Pakistan. Inside, we found some of Mohammed Ali Jinnah's office furniture as well as original documents from the All India Muslim League, dating from the time of Pakistan's independence. They were just sitting there. It was one of the many ways in which I found Pakistan to be a country of welcome surprises and sometimes surreal serendipity during my two trips.

The author is an American scholar currently based in Slovenia.

As it turns out, I was pleasantly surprised. On both of my trips to Pakistan, I stayed with the same amazing host family. I arrived in Karachi at night. At first, upon arriving at their compound, I felt as if I were in a version of my native Los Angeles with more walls and servants. The next day they took me out on my first excursion, to Jinnah's tomb. I had already travelled to more than forty countries at the time. To be frank, they were starting to run together. It only took me a few minutes to realize that Pakistan stands out. Karachi was like nothing I had ever seen before. It's a place where monkeys entertain you while you wait in traffic that refuses all attempts at control. It's where men ride on top of incredibly intricately decorated busses. It's a feast for the senses that will catch the attention of even the most jaded western traveller.



Having come directly from Thailand, where Western tourists are often taken for granted, I found that the hospitality of the Pakistani people really stood out as well. Despite the reputation that the country can sometimes have in the western media, I found that as long as I had a Desi friend to help navigate the local landscape, the people were genuinely welcoming and curious as to what a foreigner was doing there. Pakistanis were especially interested in how I was getting by on my first visit, as I was there during Ramazan. I'll always be thankful to the acquaintance who moved heaven and earth to get my iPad back after I left it on the plane.

My host family was nice enough to send me to stay with their relatives in Lahore for part of my first visit, where I became even more interested in Pakistan's history and culture, especially the circumstances surrounding the colonial era and the country's independence.

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER

cheering on Pakistan with the locals at the Wagah Border and the wide-eyed kid who sold me the ten-rupee plastic flag that still sits on my desk. After helping my friend to uncover the All India Muslim League archives in the basement of the Karachi University library, I knew I was destined to return.

After my first trip to Pakistan, I moved to Europe to pursue a double Master's degree in international relations and global history. I decided to write my thesis on the relationship between British colonial policy and religious-ethnic identity in South Asia. I was able to secure the funding from the University of Vienna to do archival research with the documents my friend and I had discovered in the Karachi University library. I returned to Karachi for the second time in 2014 and spent several weeks doing the research.

Once again, the level of hospitality and aid that I received at KU was unparalleled compared to what a master's student could expect in the US or Europe. I was even given a research assistant. My thesis was well received and received special honours.Since then, I have completed a Ph.D. and have settled in my ancestral country of Slovenia, where I work as a full-time novelist. I feel that my experiences in Pakistan continue to pay dividends. Nineteenth-century Lahore and contemporary Karachi serve as the settings for parts of my first two historical fantasy trilogies. Overall, I am glad that I came to Pakistan and hope to return again in the future.

MAKING PAKISTAN KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

Prof. Dr. Atta-ur-Rehman

Countries that are investing in education, science, and technology, innovation and entrepreneurship are succeeding in developing strong Knowledge Economies, leading to the inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development of the nation. To implement a Knowledge Economy, Pakistan will require visionary leadership and dynamic interaction between the three key players of the so-called "triple helix" First of all, a visionary government that frames suitable policies which creates an ecosystem where a Knowledge Economy can flourish. Secondly, universities and research centers that are able to produce highly qualified and creative manpower needed for a Knowledge Economy. Finally private enterprises capable of taking appropriate research and development concepts into commercially viable products and industrial processes.

The recommendations in this article will allow Pakistan to benefit from its demographic advantage of having some 100 million young men and women below the age of 20, whereas many other nations suffer from an aging population and a lack of youthful manpower. The focus of the programs is to seek investment in quality education, improve the science and technology infrastructure, launch viable projects which utilize such emerging areas as artificial intelligence, next-generation IT and biotechnology. The outcome of a sustained effort would be the manufacture and export of high technology products and a reduction in the import of manufactured goods into Pakistan. I emphasize again that only by tapping into the creativity of the entire population of Pakistan, but particularly its young population, can the nation expect to overcome its many and pressing challenges and stand with dignity in the comity of nations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Use Science, Technology, Innovation, and Production (STIP) to achieve a science and technology-driven Knowledge-Economy – an integral element of the vision, strategy, and action plan leading to a coordinated, equitable and sustained socio-economic development of Pakistan.
- The educational systems in schools, colleges and universities should be modified to develop problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and innovation among students at all levels.
- Minimum quality benchmarks should be set for college, technical and higher education with a focus on adequate faculty qualifications and the linking of long term faculty appointments with regular performance evaluation.
- Educational reforms should be introduced to ensure high quality and uniformity at all levels in the educational system.
- To attain internationally accredited academic/research standards, use should be made of new technologies that have become available to all: linkages and networks across the world, a profusion of Open Online Courses, peer-evaluation of research quality, institutional restructuring to create research facilities, revision of curricula and promotion of research.
- Open education should be encouraged by utilizing open knowledge sharing systems. The objective is to foster cross-sector collaboration based on simple mechanisms for interaction between the private sector and government-funded university or national research institutions.
- The access to technical and higher education should be progressively raised to 40% of the 18+ age group in the population to facilitate the migration of the whole nation to a Knowledge Economy.
- The incentives and investments enabling high quality technical and vocational training must be enhanced; the physical infrastructure such as laboratory equipment and ICT tools must be improved; a legislative framework needs to be formulated to ensure an integrated high-quality system of school education across Pakistan; the quality of curriculum in teaching and research establishments must be raised to international standards in order to support the anticipated growth and expansion of the technology industry created by the Knowledge Economy.
- A sustained effort is needed to raise the number of high-quality professional scientists, engineers and technically trained manpower to a ratio of 3,000 professionals involved in R&D per million of the population. To achieve this target at least 10,000 young men and women should be sent for training abroad annually for Ph.D. degrees, post-doctoral positions, and industry-related technical training. It is vitally important to ensure that on their return they are absorbed in universities, research organizations, and industry. Posts must be created in universities, research centers and industry for freshly trained returnees to Pakistan.
- The initiative to establish Foreign Engineering Universities that offer their degrees to Pakistani students and have a dynamic Science & Technology Park should be revived.
- The universities and research organizations should be restructured so that the brightest scientists and engineers are employed on a contract basis with attractive market-based salaries, clear achievement targets, complete autonomy at work, but with full accountability and regular performance assessment.
- A major program should be launched to attract the diaspora of Pakistanis across the world to return to Pakistan. They should help to establish high-quality universities and research centers in Pakistan and to support the industry in Pakistan and, where possible, return to Pakistan permanently. This resource would be invaluable towards establishing a strong Knowledge-Economy leading eventually to the manufacture of high technology products within Pakistan, thus eliminating imports. Eventually, Pakistan will be able to export high technology goods with the help of the Pakistanis working and living abroad.
- Research and development activity in the private sector should be extensively promoted by the Government through assistance with technology upgrading and manpower training.
- The Government must increase investment in the production capabilities of private sector institutions by facilitating the process of adaptive engineering, productivity improvements, employment regeneration and export orientation of manufacturers within Pakistan.
- CPEC should focus on the manufacturing and export of medium and high technology products, preferably in collaboration with the private sector industry in China. The aim would be to progressively enhance our exports to $ 300 billion/annum over the next ten years.
- To facilitate this process, technical and vocational training institutions should be set up near each of the specialized industrial hubs, ensuring the availability of highly skilled technical manpower for CPEC as well as other demand-driven and collaborative operations in the industrial clusters along the corridor.
- Businesses that are geared to the manufacture and export of high technology goods and those that explicitly address the three pillars of the SDGs should be rewarded through tax incentives, matching grants and public procurement policies.
- The duties and tax structures should be revised so that there are no taxes on parts needed for the manufacture of medium and high technology goods, and significant taxes on import of finished products, to encourage basic manufacture.
- A revolving National Innovation Fund of at least Rs. 5 billion should be established to support indigenous technology development. Its purpose would be to facilitate the adoption, adaptation and rapid absorption of key technologies in both public and private sector institutions.
- Measures should be taken to strengthen industrial research and technology development including pilot plant level studies.

- Specialised institutions be set up to regulate the information flow between industry and research institutions. At the same time, legal institutions related to corporate law and intellectual property should be established.

- 'Pioneering' status should be granted to high tech industries with the benefit of long term tax-free status, thus promoting manufacturing in high tech fields.

- Foreign Direct Investment should be linked to knowledge transfer to Pakistan in all development projects to address the issue of global competitiveness of Pakistan's industry, now and in the future.

- All development projects submitted for approval by the Planning Division should have a mandatory element of technology development, equivalent to at least 5% of the project cost, in order to ensure national self-reliance and to enhance Pakistan's export capabilities. This should be reviewed and approved by an expert committee, prior to project processing.

- A "Digitised Pakistan" should be created with Smart Cities. All Federal and Provincial government offices should be fully digitized. High-quality and affordable access to the ICT infrastructure should be ensured through the rapid expansion of broadband services in the country. Pakistan must urgently acquire the best quality 5G services and it must be competitive in the region.

- NADRA should be digitally linked to FBR and other key national organisations in order to widen the tax net and raise national tax revenue.

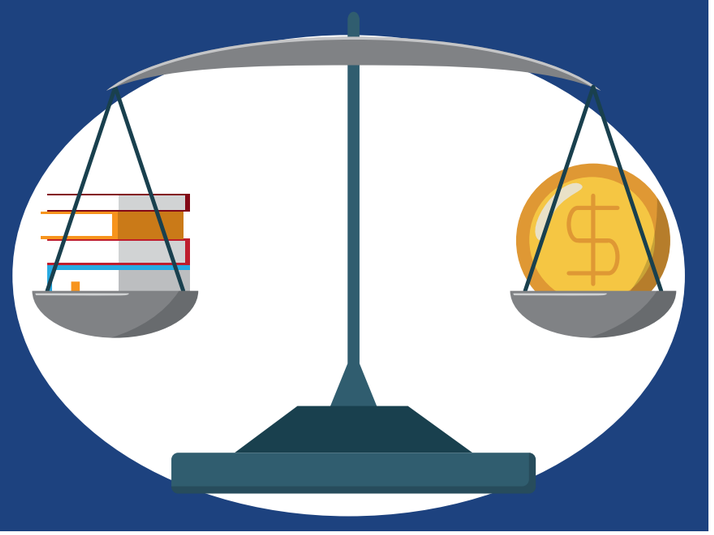
- Measures should be taken to facilitate the entrepreneurial process from discovery to the marketplace. Courses on entrepreneurship and business plan development should be taught in colleges and universities. Topics such as risk-sharing, negotiation expertise, legal protection and institutional infrastructure must be included in the curriculum.

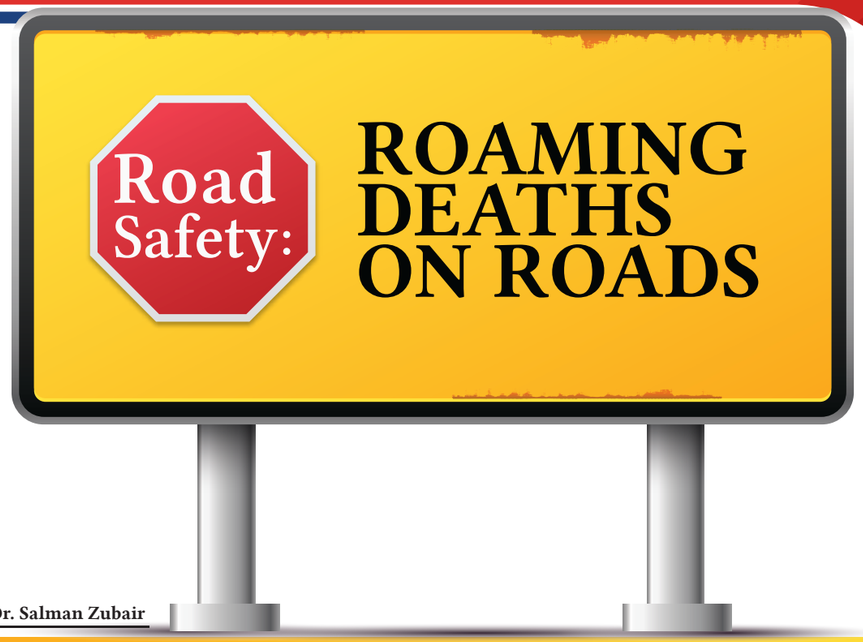
- In order to enhance the capability of local companies, public funds should be used as a powerful tool to outsource projects to the private sector in areas such as E-Governance, E-Commerce, Artificial Intelligence and others.

- Initially, at least 4% of Pakistan's GDP should be allocated to education and progressively increased to 6%. At least 30% of this allocation should be directed towards the higher education sector.

- A National Research Fund amounting to 1% of GDP should be created to promote research related to technology development.

The author is a renowned scientist currently serving as the Chairman of Prime Minister's Taskforce on Science & Technology, former Federal Minister and Chairman HEC.





Dr. Salman Zubair

Road accident is getting extremely regular due to the collision of speeding vehicles and the ignorance of street security measures. According to research, an average of 15 people per day have lost their lives in the last ten year's data due to road accidents. Nearly 1.2 million people die each year and between 20 and 50 million people suffer from nonfatal injuries due to road accidents. More than 1,000 youngsters die daily due to traffic incidents in the world. The statistics are devilishly alarming. Its high time that we start taking road safety seriously. The causalities are increasing day by day. Is this how we are going to move forward?

Let's take a look around what we see on the road, accidents, traffic, encroachment and poor infrastructure. As per data, 67 percent of accidents occur due to human negligence, 28 percent of accidents happen due to poor and deteriorating conditions of roads and the remaining 5 percent of accidents occur due to inadequate vehicles on road. Most of the road accidents occur because of incomplete knowledge about operating vehicles and lack of road safety measures.

Thousands of accidents occur every year. People are killed, many of them are wounded and paralyzed. Nowadays, we are so used to the news of road accidents that we probably don't feel a thing. That's the reason we don't take road safety seriously. If we have to diminish the road accidents, we have to follow the rules and should take safety measures seriously. The government has set up various plans to control road traffic and one must obey them for his own sake.

Rush driving is a violation and an offense crime. Nowadays, for the sake of thrill, mostly teens drive recklessly and cross the speed limit. The possibility of collision doubles when we drive faster. For sure speed thrills but it certainly takes the life of an innocent.

To avoid mishaps, one must avoid rush driving at any cost. Even the government should intervene and take strict actions so those involved won't be capable of doing it next time. In addition, most of the time children come in front of the cars out of nowhere and die instantly. They often jump or run on the roads while playing causing the catastrophe.

Children should avoid playing on streets or asphalts because they often run behind their toy or ball, and end up being the victim of misfortune. Parents must keep an eye on children and should not let them play on the roads. The most common problem of accidents is the usage of cell phones. Our generation is so used to the cell phones that we often don't see what's right in front of us. The usage of cell phones distracts the driver and causes car crashes. One should avoid cell phones because multitasking behind the wheel can cost one's life.

On the other hand, pedestrians cross roads without looking right or left. Instead of walking on pavement or using the pedestrian bridge, they prefer walking on roads which ultimately causes the accident. Such mishaps happen when pedestrians ignore traffic rules and signs. Henceforth, people should abide by the rules and avoid walking on the roads. Each individual across the country should give full consideration to street well being whether they utilize the vehicle or not.

Because of the absence of direction from parents, kids and students are the most vulnerable on the streets. Ignorance may lead to street mishaps, minor wounds or major injuries. Parents must guide and instruct them on the safety measure of traffic rules. The government should set up various awareness projects.

These awareness programs should encompass workshops, seminars, conferences, public messages and so on. Moreover, the government should include road safety and road signs lessons in the syllabus of the students and inform them from a very early age. Furthermore, the government should keep an eye on the habitual lawbreakers and suspend their licenses if they don't show the signs of improvement.

Everyone should undergo a complete driving course under the guidance of an authorized instructor before starting to drive on the roads. Road accidents can be avoided, if we follow the rules and regulations. One mustn't drive recklessly and eliminate all the bad practices. **STAY SAFE!**

The author is an Assistant Professor at Department of Geography, University of Karachi.

VOICE OF SINDH

Emerging As a Narrative Builder Through Visual Arts

One of the great challenges today is that we often feel untouched by the problems of others and by social issues like poverty, global issues like climate change, even when we could easily do something to help.

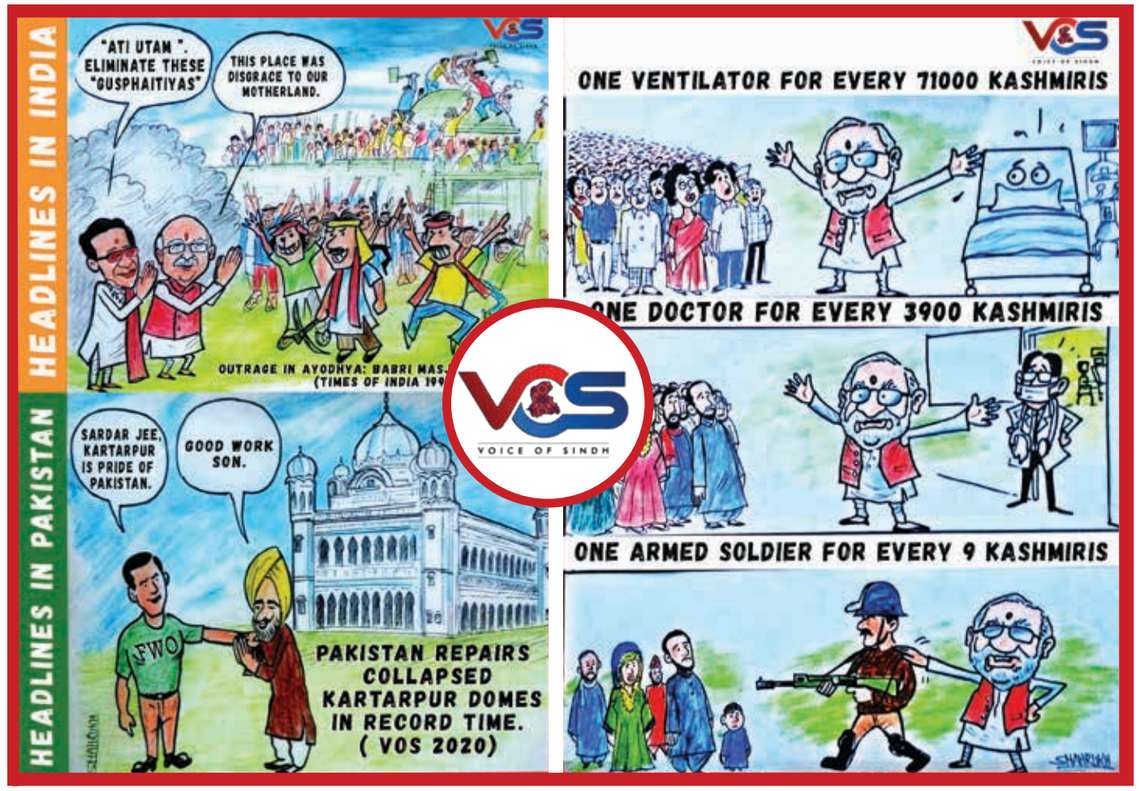
We do not feel strongly enough that we are part of a global community, part of a larger We.

Giving people access to data most often leave them feeling overwhelmed and disconnected, not empowered and poised for action. This is where art can make a difference.

Art does not show people what to do, yet engaging with a good work of art can connect you to your senses, body, and mind. It can make the world felt. And this felt feeling may spur thinking, engagement, and even action.

Visual Arts have always been instrumental in projecting social and political issues on local, national, regional and global levels.

Artists are the ones who attract the audience over a specific social or political issue and create a sense of sensitization among them to participate and respond to that message which is communicated in the art.



In a larger capacity, media outlets become narrative builders through this technique. For an instance, BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera are not only global media giants but they are the narrative builders and opinion shapers among its diversified audience in order to serve their vested interests.

Voice of Sindh has taken up the idea of using visual arts as a tool to sensitize our audience to significant social, political, cultural and many other issues on national and global levels. We are doing narrative building through the power of visual arts which is visible in the output of our work.

GLOBAL FRONT:

There are a variety of issues mainly from political sphere on the global front, that need to be highlighted so that a strong sense of sensitization is achieved. Significantly, the Indian illegal occupation of Kashmir valley and recent illegitimate measures taken by the fascist Indian government led by RSS inspired Prime Minister Narendra Modi demand attention. Be it the issue of Citizen Amendment Act in India to marginalize the Indian Muslims or the inhuman lockdown of the Kashmir valley since last 300 days, Voice of Sindh has projected all of these issues through its visual arts and received exponential response from the people residing both in Pakistan and India.

In a recent malicious attempt by the Indian government to target the Muslims through the Tableeghi Jamat event in Delhi during the Coronavirus pandemic, Voice of Sindh rejected the Indian media's spiteful campaign of spreading hatred towards the Indian Muslims not only through various visual arts but also by a special blog by the Editor-in-Chief. The visual arts and blog were highly applauded and praised not only in Pakistan but it also received recognition and appreciation from the Indian Muslims and some rational Indian Hindus who were against the Indian state's narrative of marginalizing Muslims.

SOCIAL ISSUES:

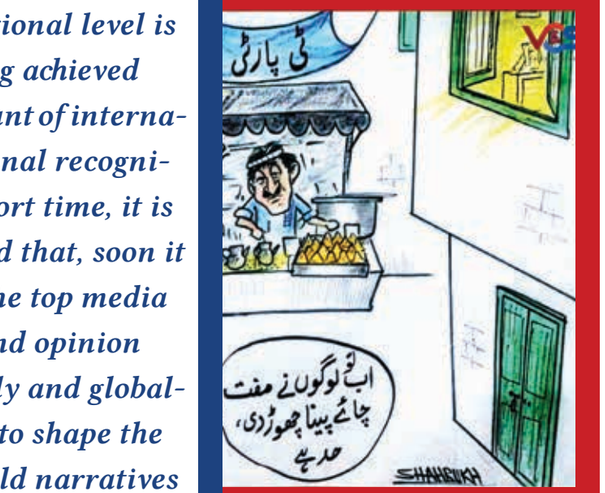
Voice of Sindh has also been very active in highlighting social issues in the country ranging from promoting national unity, intra-faith and interfaith harmony, supporting government's measures and projecting our national heroes.

CORONA VIRUS: Public Service Messages

Voice of Sindh has been running an impactful campaign in the wake of the global pandemic. From appreciating the doctors, policemen and media workers for being frontline soldiers in the war against COVID-19, the creative team is also striving to create a general awareness among the public through a variety of public service messages in the form of visual arts, blogs and informative videos.

CULTURE AND HISTORY:

For a strong nation, its cultural and historical identity are of great significance. Our province and country's culture and history is not only quite rich but immensely diversified. Voice of Sindh has been quite proactive in promoting the culture and historical events, places and personalities of the province through its visual arts and other platforms on a regular basis.



Although, Voice of Sindh is quite a new digital media outlet, its potential for being a strong narrative builder on national and regional level is evident.Having achieved tremendous amount of international and national recognition in such a short time, it is highly anticipated that, soon it will be among the top media think tanks and opinion shapers nationally and globally. It will strive to shape the opinions and build narratives on national and global levels that are in line with the national interest of the state.

Cultural Legends:

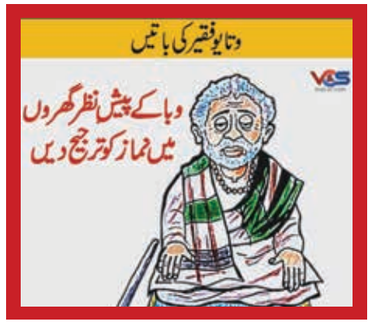
Voice of Sindh has developed a social media campaign based on the legendary character of Sindh,

Watayo Faqir

The campaign comprises of public service messages depicting the witty and satirical nature of Watayo Faqir. It includes

27 pictorial

and animated messages in both Urdu and Sindhi languages.



Trilingual News Website:

Voice of Sindh is the first digital media outlet of the country to have a trilingual news website. The news website covers all the daily happenings and news 24/7 in three languages, English, Urdu and Sindhi. It contains a very active blog section whose contributors are notable people belonging to different segments of society, including members of national and provincial assemblies, politicians, philanthropists, educationists, scholars, journalists, showbiz artists, entrepreneurs, students etc.

ENGLISH WEBSITE

URDU WEBSITE

SINDHI WEBSITE

OPPOSITION'S DIARY

DISMAL STATE OF EDUCATION IN SINDH

The government website has only the number of children who are enrolled in public schools which is 20 to 35 percent of the UNICEF report.

The author is a Member of Provincial Assembly Sindh and a prominent educationist.

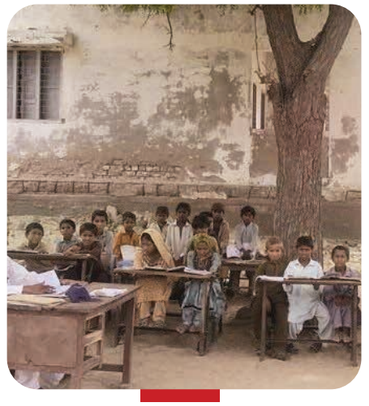
Rabia Azfar Nizami

Western society has learned science and mathematics from the Muslims, during the Abbasid period of Muslims. There was a time when the debate about the competence and ability of the Muslim scientists was common throughout the world and they are still remembered as Muslim scientists. The above facts were obtained by the Muslims of India and Greece, which is an accepted and authenticated fact in the world. Europeans compare data and content with everything they have. They have begun to analyze human life by taking it into the realm of statistics. The average age of a human being is 60 (sixty) years, of which it refers to the life of twenty years for sleeping. The rest of life requires time for them to eat and to survive, so we must not waste these fifteen years at a time, and this is the secret of West's progress and prosperity.

Doing a statistical analysis of human life in the Western world means that your life without facts and figures (data) is a dream come true. We analyze here the facts and figures related to education in Sindh.

The facts and figures about the education of Sindh published on the website of the Bureau of Statistics, Planning and Development Department, Government of Sindh, which have been compiled from the statistical data for the period 2012-13 to 2016-17, was published in 2017. The numbers are given below.

The total number of schools in Sindh province are 38,132, out of which 33,829 are boys' schools and 4,303 are girls' schools. The total number of teachers in primary schools is 91,092 and out of them, male teachers are 67,695 and female teachers are 23,397. Similarly, the enrollment figures in primary schools are 23,75,156, out of which 13,26,502 are boys, while the total number of girls is 10,48,654. Now let us look at the result of the data issued by the Sindh Government, which has an average of 5 (five) teachers in each school in Sindh, while the average number of children enrolled in each school is 62 (sixty-two). And likewise, every teacher should be given 26 (twenty-six) children to teach, which is somewhat accurate and appropriate, but the facts are quite contrary.



The exact result is that 6 million children are out of school. Why these children were not enrolled? It is because the government does not have enough resources to enroll children in primary schools and give them the basic right to education. The ghost schools and teachers is another part of the story, I have been visiting various schools in rural and urban areas of Sindh for the last several years. The fact is that in rural areas, the government has failed to pay attention to education. People from backward areas, including the Thar desert and Kohistan, are living in worst conditions and they have sort of accepted it with no eagerness for improvement.

There is no difference in the educational reports of African countries and the education status of rural Sindh issued by different UN agencies. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan report published last year, 45 percent of the population of Sindh is unable to write and read while more than 60% of the population in Sindh's rural areas is illiterate. In addition to it, 70% of the Education Budget goes into salaries, resulting in an insufficient budget for the furniture and other missing facilities in these schools. Most schools in Sindh do not have clean water, washrooms and sanitation systems which also contributes to irregular attendance and dropouts.

Out of 45,555 schools about 7000 schools are ghost schools and an almost double number of schools which are shown active and functional on papers only. There is no doubt that Sindh's educational quality stands nowhere close to provinces like Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit-Baltistan. Pakistan accounts for 45% of the illiterate population and Sindh and Baluchistan are major contributors.

Question is why Sindh's poor and marginalized people are deprived of the right to education?

The politicians have no will to educate the population of Sindh because they don't want people to stand up for their rights. This is one of the major reasons we see extremely poor governance in the education department. In addition, we also see a lack of interest from the people of Sindh because the demand is not there. They don't ask their rulers to provide them their basic rights including health, education and clean drinking water.

The issue is not only at the politicians or ruling party end but it is also about the people asking for their rights that the constitution of Pakistan gives them. Sadly, the majority in Sindh has given up, the province that generates revenue for Pakistan is losing literacy points and productivity of human capital. We have to make headway in helping the population to demand their right to education helping to shape a better environment and reduce the gap of uneven progress in the society because education is our final hope towards a progressive Pakistan.

YOUTH MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGN 'YMC'

Najia Mir

Youth Mobilization Campaign (YMC) is one of the most important features of Voice of Sindh. It includes tours to famous historical places that involves engagement of youth enrolled in prestigious universities and colleges of Sindh. It aims to further expand the youth activism and promote students' engagement.

The author is the Head of Youth Mobilization Campaign, Voice of Sindh

The team reached out to **Jaafar Jackson,** the nephew of Michael Jackson who was on a visit to Pakistan. The YMC team had an exclusive meeting with Jaafar, who was very delighted to visit Pakistan for the very first time.

YMC team joined hands with the youth of **Hindu Community** and facilitated a protest arranged by the local Hindu Community in Karachi. The community protested against India's state sponsored communal riots in response to the Anti CAA bill protests in all over India.

On **World Women's Day,** the YMC team consisting of young rap singers prepared a special anthem for paying tribute to the patience, strength, and fortitude of all women and girls around the country in helping ensure social, political and economic progress and stability in the society.

YMC team conducted another **field tour of Sehwan and its famous Purana Qila.** The fort is now in an inverted position as an act of punishment by God to the Emperor of that village during that time. The fort is an eye opening message that power is always temporary and one should always be fearful to ALMIGHTY ALLAH who is the One and Only Almighty. The team also paid respects at the holy shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar and met the Custodian of the shrine.

Have a Glimpse of Our Notable Activities

The inaugural activity of YMC was the **Sindh Tour** which was taken by 46 participants.

The participants included students from University of Karachi, IQRA University, NED University, Federal Urdu University, SZABIST, Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, Jamshoro, Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur and various prestigious academic institutions of the province.

Journalists from leading local and foreign media groups including Voice of America, Express News, Bol News were Independent bloggers, Vloggers and photographers also joined Voice of Sindh's tour.

The participants had the chance of interacting with one another and to learn from each other's experiences. They visited Nasarpur, Odero Lal, Hala and Bhit Shah.

They witnessed the craftsmen's work and a magnificent example of interfaith harmony in Odero Lal where a mosque and temple stand adjacent to each other.

The participants were overwhelmed to note this unmatched example of interfaith harmony where both the Muslim and Hindus also don't perform acts which are contrary to others' belief such as slaughtering cows or eating non-vegetarian food.

The tour was concluded by visiting the hub of Sufism in the province i.e. the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai at Bhit Shah.

KASHMIR DAY SEMINAR

• *A seminar on Kashmir Day was held at IQRA University in collaboration with Voice of Sindh. The Patron-in-Chief Voice of Sindh and Founding Chancellor IQRA University Mr. Hunaid Lakhani addressed the students and urged them to join the Youth Mobilization Campaign of Voice of Sindh. The Chief Guest of the event, renowned Diplomat Ambassador Shahid M. Amin lauded the efforts of the VoS team and conveyed his best wishes in this regard.*

Team YMC visited the infamous "Aurat March" on World Women's Day in Karachi. The team interacted with the youth and recorded opinions on the said subject. Famous politician Sharmila Farooqi and event organizer Sheema Kermani spoke to Voice of Sindh team and expressed their views on the event and the initiative.

Voice of Sindh marked its presence in the Annual Career Fair held at IQRA University. The event was attended by thousands of students, and hundreds of corporate sector companies and organizations.

YMC team was given an exclusive entry in the event. It also conducted interviews and live auditions of hundreds of interested students who aspired to be a part of our organization.

Provincial Minister of Education Sindh Mr. Saeed Ghani visited and expressed his best wishes to the VoS team for launching this initiative.

• *During the fever of Pakistan Super League which was happening exclusively in Pakistan for the first time, our team reached out to the youth of Karachi in the National Stadium where the youth was very excited to watch the biggest cricket league happening in their home town after years. The team also had a casual conversation with the university students who seemed quite thrilled and interested for PSL.*

LIFESTYLE:

MIND YOUR MIND

Sana Khan Nadeem

We live "lives" in many junctures. This journey starts with the birth of a human and the phases he/she goes through. Human plays a prodigious role with some extemporaneous twist and turns during this journey, as situations and time never stay the same. The velour of taking steps comes from the most cognitive and superior part of our body, the mind; housed in the brain. There are terms in psychology which explain the better function of our mind, while with the growing age. Cognitive Psychology & neuropsychology. It helps to study the minds of people how they acquire, perceive, process & store information using "mind". This piece of the body is always active. A healthy mind is the primary bit to react to any stimuli. So, for those who're of the opinion of thinking from heart, is living in the out-&-out bizarre world as taking the credit from "mind" is a real torment. Whatsoever problem we face, personal or social, there is always avant-garde and that too could be swift. The only thing is that you need to have credence on your brain and staying heedful. A disease can be half cured if the mind "dares" the "fear".Thinking of the risks, possibilities, listening to people around, trusting media; these things are menacing for you.

All you need to do is start swallowing what the top of your head offers & take exception to other people by allowing your fear of getting trounced by the unseen. Only your mind will make you come out of your dreads whether you be into a problem or agonizing from any disease. Just don't lose your senses whilst in vexation. Addressing the power of the mind and it's working, we must go for such a routine which may help in the increase of the performance of the mind. Basal is, without doubt, Exercise. Little but a requisite added routine which may increase the health/function of the mind. Meditation/yoga/walk would go perfect for this. Next, try to sleep early at night. I know how much it matters as for a couple of nights, due to caseload, I couldn't sleep timely & that made a huge change in my thinking and working rhythm. So, yes sleep early & get lionized by your mind.

Further executions are to try to use your non-dominant hand while writing/working. Research shows that using your opposite hands while performing different activities can be so challenging for rapid brain activity. Some added activities are to learn something new that has been kept up in the air by you. Furthermore, try and get socialize.

"The author is a psychologist and columnist based in Karachi."

AWAZ E BEZUBAN
WELFARE ASSOCIATION

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WHETHER ITS A DOG OR A DOVE, TREAT ANIMALS WITH LOVE.

Awaz-e-Bezuban helps animals in distress, and operates a no-kill animal felicity org with the goal of protecting animals both physically and psychologically with a venerable team of young students.

Our motto has always been, "**Help The Innocents Around**".

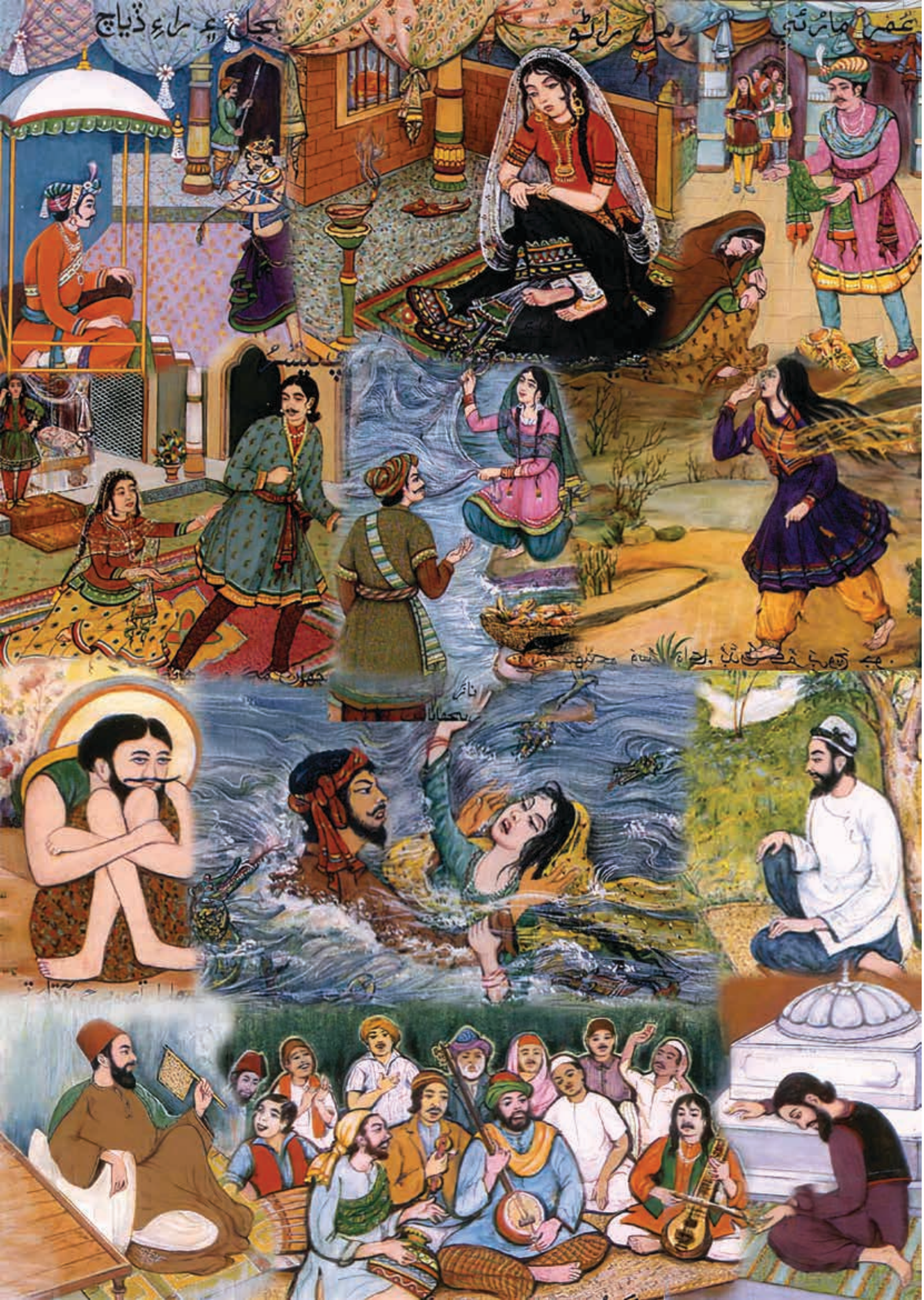
AEB is leading numerous operations mainly along the following aims:

- **Awareness Campaigns**
- **Data Collection & Research**
- **Awaz Bridge (online consultancy)**
- **TNVR**

You too can support this cause through:

- **Internship Programs**
- **Volunteer Work**
- **Or Be A Part Of Our Online Efforts**

All life is vital, regardless of how little.

We believe that through practice and common interest in the welfare of animals, we can exude humanity, and benevolence in Pakistan and "help a paw" in need.

SIDRA QAMAR, PRESIDENT